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Gender Differences In Letter Shape Recognition To 4-5 Year Old Children In Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract
Learning in Kindergarten aims to develop some abilities possessed by children including oral communication ability, literacy and reading ability, listening ability and comprehension of command, writing ability, and ability to use literature. The gender gap remains ongoing issue in Indonesia. This paper presents evidence of gender differences in learning in differences in letter shape recognition to 4-5 year old children in which 30 children from two schools participated. This study using Quantitative research methods in comparative research. The result of this study indicates there are a difference between boys and girls aged 4-5 years in terms of recognizing and interpreting the symbols of letters in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Keywords; gender differences; letter shape recognition; children;

INTRODUCTION

Education includes everything related to life. Practical education in learning activities and internalization value enhancement of perfect intellectual abilities must be accompanied by efforts grow, develop, maintain the good potential of students (Nirwana J & Abu Bakar, 2019:163). One form of education unit in Indonesia is Early Childhood Education (PAUD), where at this time Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is experiencing rapid development, this is evidenced by the Gross Enrollment Rate or Angka Partisipasi Kasar (APK) of PAUD Indonesia managed to exceed the world average. This is based on UNESCO data Institute for statistics 2014 where the world's PAUD APK is 54% while the APK Indonesia's PAUD has reached 63%. This is in line with the policy direction Development of Education and Culture in 2014 one of which is Increasing access and quality of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) (Utami, R. D., Munisa, M., & Harahap, A. S, 2020: 288).

One of the development areas in the growth of basic abilities in kindergarten is language development. Language allows children to translate experiences into symbols that can be used to communicate and think. Language development is a form of communication used by members of the community, whether in writing, in writing or in signs, which is based on a

system of symbols. Language can be used as a tool to interact and identify with other people. The language that is owned by the child is the language that has been owned from the processing of the family and the environment that has been developed. Children have received a lot of input, information, and knowledge about language from the environment, both the family environment, community and social environment, as well as peers, and especially the mother tongue.

The characteristics of young learners have been summarized by Slattery and Willis (2001),who argued that children acquire language in different ways based on their age. Students under the age of 7, known as very young learners, acquire language unconsciously through the language exposure around them by hearing and playing. o reinforce the vocabulary being learnt, they further explain that it can be done through participative games, role-playing and dramatizations, repetition and imitations, and physical activities (body movements) (Yusuf, Qismullah, et al.2017:115)

Language development is one of the main areas of early childhood development. Children's language ability was developed because it is used for communication in the socialization and actualization. Children's language development is inseparable from the child benefit of language. Language development is mostly generated through interaction, conversation, and dialogue with adults. With these activities, the child will be able to understand the expressive model of speech, understanding, vocabulary, and the motivation of children in relationships with others or social life. The development of this language is always related to the social context. This is because the main function of the language for the child is to communicate with others.

Language learning at an early age children are directed at communication skills, both verbally and in writing (symbolic). Learning in Kindergarten aims to develop some abilities possessed by children include oral communication ability, literacy and reading ability, listening ability and comprehension of command, writing ability, and ability to use literature (Suyanto, 2005: 161). Reading is one of the four language skills that are taught in schools. According to Tarigan (2008: 1), the four types of skills are listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills. In mastering language skills, initially the child knows the language through listening. After listening to the child trying to speak imitating the language being listened to. The next stage the child will practice reading and trying to recognize the form of writing. Thus, these four language skills are closely related (Wicaksono, 2014: 9).

Language is a form of communication- whether spoken, written, or signed that is based on a system of symbols. Language consists of the words used by a community and the rules for varying and combining them (Santrock: 2011). Language includes every means of communication by symbolizing thoughts and feelings to convey meaning to others. This includes a wide variety of forms of communication, such as: writing, speech, symbolic language, facial expressions, gestures, mime, and art. According to Vygotsky in Wolfolk (1995) in Susanto (2011: 73) states that: "language provides a means for expressing ideas and asking

question and it provides the categories and concepts for thinking". In line with Susanto's opinion (2011: 74) that "Language is a tool for thinking, expressing oneself and communicating.

Children's oral language and early literacy development serve the foundation for later reading abilities and overall academic success. It is well documented that children with low oral language abilities are at risk for poor outcomes as they progress. Much research has examined the language and literacy development of children learning one language. Unfortunately, insufficient attention has been paid to the language and literacy development of children learning two languages or dual language learners (DLLs), particularly during the early childhood years (Hammer &Carol Scheffner &et al, 2014: 716).

There is accumulating evidence in the literature indicating that the gender gap in reading may be associated with differences in the way children approach learning to read. These differences are described in brief below and include learning preferences and differences in memory and information processing (Ruth P&Collin P, 2016: 614)

According Broughton in Tarigan (2008: 12) suggests that there are two important aspects in reading, namely: a) Mechanical skills, which can be considered to be in the lower order. These aspects include: 1) Introduction to the form of letters; 2) Introduction of linguistic elements (phonemes / graphemes, words, phrases, clause patterns, sentences, etc.); 3) Introduction of spelling and sound relationships (the ability to voice written materials or "to bark at print"); 4) Speed reading to slow level. comprehension skills, which can be considered to be in higher order. These aspects include: 1) Understanding simple notions (lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical); 2) Understanding signification or meaning (author's intent and purpose, cultural relevance or circumstance, and reader reaction); 3) Evaluation or assessment (content and form); 4) Flexible reading speed, which is easily adjusted to the circumstances.

In an alphabetic language, breaking the alphabetic code is essential for learning to read and write accurately and effortlessly (Snow et al, 1998 in Jones, C. D., Clark, S. K., & Reutzel, D, 2013) and students who learn letter names and sounds more quickly make greater pro- gress in reading (Blaiklock 2004 in Jones, C. D., Clark, S. K., & Reutzel, D. 2013: 88).

According Lamb & Arnold (Rahim, 2005: 16), one of the factors that affect the ability to read the physiological factors is gender. A national study of the US department of education in 2000 (Santrock, 2007: 99) states that boys are slightly better than girls in math and science. However, girls are better learners, and they are significantly more than men in reading. In another recent study, girls had higher reading achievements compared with boys. This is in line with Azhim's opinion (2002: 37) which also says that girls over boys in the language aspect. This difference will decrease in harmony with the developmental phase and age.

More recently, de Sousa and Okhill (1996) explored the effect of interest levels on the comprehension-monitoring ability of 8- and 9 year old children. Two groups participated in the study; they were matched for single-word reading and vocabulary skills, but differed in comprehension skill. The comprehension-monitoring task was either administered under standard cononditions or was presented as a game in which the children had to try to spot problems in the texts in order to help them to solve a crime.

Another studies (Ainley, Hidi&Berndorff, 2002) has explored the relation between gender, interest expressed in a text, affective response to the text and persistence in reading, in this

study focuses in older children (grade 10). The researcher recorded student responses after they read extracts from a set of four literacy texts, including affective responses and decisions about how far they would continue reading. Gender was strongly colected with the measures of topic interest for all four texts than did boys, but the size of the gender difference varied across texts, and was not systematically associated with the gender of the protagonist. The girls were also more likely to persist with reading that were the boys.

Based on the results of the field observations showed that the girls enthusiasm in reading is higher than boys. This is shown that girls having a good interest in reading compared with boys. Boys tend to be easily bored and discouraged when having difficulty in reading while girls who have difficulty in reading still trying to read with the help of teachers.

Differences in male and female reading ability can be seen from the PISA study of 2000, which shows that in many countries including Indonesia girls have better reading ability than boys. In general, in all countries except in Liechtenstein, females score superior to men, and 5 in Indonesia show quite high achievement differences (Suhendra, 2006: 7). Pasiak (2006: 61), also said that girls' language skills are higher than boys because the language-setting center of the female brain is more diffuse than that of the more focused brain in the left brain.

Therefore, girls are more likely to be proficient in communicating, including in reading ability. Reading ability is interpreted to recognize letters or characters, to sound letters or letters (words), to understand the meaning or purpose of words and readings (Dhieni, Fridani, Yarmi, et al., 2005: 5.3). Based on observation by the observer in Kindergarten Group B in Pundong Bantul sub-district, Nurhuda Kindergarten, Pertiwi Kindergarten 16, Kindergarten Pertiwi 14, Tunas Harapan Kindergarten, TK Monggang and TK PKK 78 Watu show that not all the children have the same reading ability. There are children who still have difficulty in distinguishing the vowels a, i, u, e, o and consonants such as b, p, d, w, and m. The child is still turned upside down when asked to sound the letter designated teacher like letter b in read d, d read d, and so forth. In addition, the results of obseration also shows that the ability to read each child's words are different. There are children who are able to read letters and words and there are also children who are still difficult in sounding letters or words.

In the ability to interpret the words, there are children who are able to match words with pictures and also children who still confuse in matching the word with the picture. In addition, children are also still helpful in terms of understanding images with simple sentences written. Based on problems, it can be concluded that children are still in difficulty in reading. In the study above, the author has not specified on the topic of reading skill problems, therefore, this study would like to specify the views on different forms based on the gender of children aged 4-5 years in Yogyakarta.

METHOD

This study using Quantitative research methods in comparative research. This method is used to explain the comparison or differences between the variables found in the study

(Sugiono, 2007). Researchers take the population of children aged 4-5 years in El Genio Academy and El Genio Al kautsar. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling which only focus on children age 4-5 years. The data collection methods is using observation and using observation guidelines for instruments. The hypothesis of this study are: (1) Ho: There is no difference in the introduction of letters based on the gender of children aged 4-5 years in Yogyakarta; (2) Hi: There is a difference in the introduction of letters based on the gender of children aged 4-5 years in Yogyakarta.

The children participating in these studies were from two Kindergarten which 30 children aged 4-5 years. All participating children were devided 15 gilrs and 15 boys children. Data analysis method used in this research is statistical analysis. According to Hadi (Fadholi, 2011) statistics is a scientific way that is prepared to collect, prepare, present and analyze research data in the form of numbers. Moreoverstatistics are expected to be accountable for drawing correct conclusions and making good decisions. Data analysis methods used in this study using statistical methods with SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) 16.0 for Windows Program. Furthermore, as the data analysis method performed using t-test to spot differences in the recognation of gender-based forms of letters of children aged 4-5 years. This analysis using independent sample t-test. The procedure in the research including all pasticipants (children) were tested in classroom condition over 3 consecutive weeks on the same day and at the same week.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research that has been done in El Genio Academy and El Genio Al Kautsar, Sleman, Yogyakarta on differences in the introduction of the shape of recognation letters based on the gender of children aged 4-5 years showed that gender affected children in the shape recognation of letters. Output Independent Sample T-Test obtained the value of Sig. (2-tailed) which obtained overall results> 0.05, then according to the basis of decision making in the Independent Sample T-Test, it can be concluded that H0 rejected and H1 accepted, which means there is a difference in recognizing letter symbols in 4-5 age children by gender. In addition, based on the results of the research, the overall differences of boys and girls also affect the process of recognition and symbols of letters in children. Before performing the Independent Sample T-Test test, the researchers conducted a normality test showing normal distributed data 0.000> 0.05.

After the normality test showed normal distributed data, the researchers then conducted a homogeneity test that showed the significance value of gender differences in recognizing the symbol of the letters of children have the same variant because the significance value of homogeneous test group 0.065> 0.05, then the homogeneity test of data difference in recognizing the symbol letters in children ages 4-5 based on gender show significant.

The final result of the difference in recognizing the symbols of letters in 4-5 years old children by gender obtained the result of the value of Sig. (2-teailed) of 0.049 <0.05, then according to the basis of decision making in the Independent Sample T-Test Test, it can be concluded H0 rejected and H1 accepted, which means there is a difference in recognizing the

symbols of letters in children aged 4-5 by gender. Then, based on the second output, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.005 <0.05, then it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 accepted, meaning there is a difference in interpreting the letters of children aged 4-5 by gender. The following table normality test, homogeneity test and t-test:

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Table 1
Tests of Normality

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	kelompok	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
nilai	A	.340	14	.000	.579	14	.000
	B	.198	15	.116	.888	15	.063

Source: Results of Field Research, 2018

Based on the table above, the output of the Independent Sample T-Test obtained a value of Sig. (2-tailed) which obtained overall results > 0.05, so according to the basis of decision making in the Independent Sample T-Test test, it can be said that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, which means there are differences in recognizing letter symbols in children aged 4-5 based on gender.

Table 2
Lilliefors Significance Correction

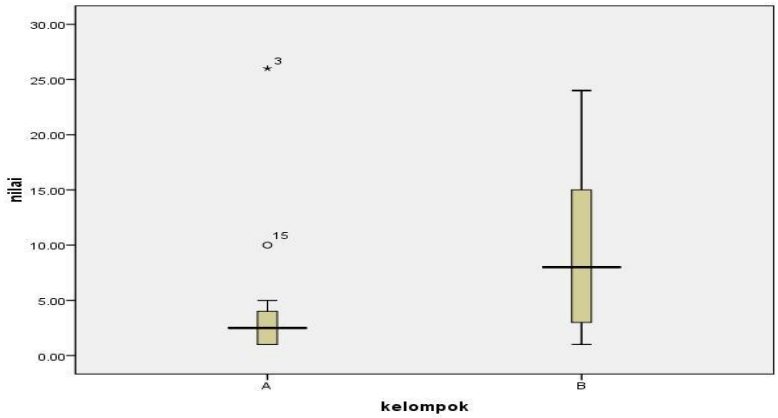

Table 3
Independent Sample Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Nilai Equal variances assumed	3.692	.065	-2.058	28	.049	-5.40000	2.62358	-10.77416	-.02584
Equal variances not assumed			-2.058	26.888	.049	-5.40000	2.62358	-10.78419	-.01581

Source: Results of Field Research, 2018

The table above shows that after the normality test showed normal distributed data, the researchers then conducted a homogeneity test that showed the significance value of gender differences in recognizing the symbol of the letters of children have the same variant because the significance value of homogeneous test group 0.065> 0.05, then the homogeneity test of data difference in recognizing the symbol letters in children ages 4-5 based on gender show significant.

Based on the results from the data above shows that there is a difference between knowing boys and girls in recognizing and interpreting the symbols of letters in children aged 4-5 years.

This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by (Ruth Price-mohr: 2016) who examines the synthetic phonics against children aged 4-5 years. The results show that there is a difference between boys and girls and reading and for girls is better than men.

As previously mentioned that Reception-age children and boys in particular, make more progress in reading through the use of a more eclectic approach to the teaching of reading than is currently being advocated in schools. There was no evidence in any of these studies that children were confused by using more than one strategy to read. In short, the result of this study shows that girls aged 4-5 years are superior in recognizing and interpreting symbols of letters than boys aged 4-5 years in Yogyakarta.

In this study, gender differences of aged 4-5 years children in recognizing the letters in the test was using SPSS data. The data found that there is a difference between boys and girls aged 4-5 years children in recognizing letters. First previous study, the journal of gender gaps in early educational achievement (Deborah A, 2015) the data come from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) which is a national study designed to provide an in depth understanding of children‟s development. The study started in 2004 with the recruitment of two groups: one group of 5,107 children aged 0-1 years old (the birth or "B group") and another of 4, 983 children aged 4-5 years old (the kindergarten or "K group") and their families across all states and territories of Australia. The interviews have subsequently been conducted with families every two years.

The result of the study reproduces the decomposition result from preferred comparative purposes. There are imporant conclusion; (1) the relative advantage that girls have in reading exists only among children in low and middle SES families, while boys‟ relative advantage in numaracy only occurs in high SES families; (2) girls were more ready for school and had better teacher-assessed literacy skills in kindergarten. This result in low and medium SES girls having significantly higher reading test schore than boys.

Likewise, in another study (Rosangela, Florencia & Xia Li, 2016) explores sex differences in lanaguage and socio-emotional skills. The research focuses on children 7 months old to 6 years old in Chile in 2012 and Nicaragua in 2013. A focus on young children allowed for ruling out a set of environmental and identity effects to explain the gap. Girls had an advantage in both countries and both dimentions.

Boys in Chile scored at -0.13 standard deviations (SD) in language in the distribution of females. In addition, boys scored at -2.20 SD in social-emotional skills. The gaps in Nicaragua were not statistically different to those in Chile. Thus geographical and cultural variation across the two countries did not affect the gap. Within countries, variation in family characteristics, parenting practices and health investments did not explain the gap either. These findings shed light on the role of biological and environmental factors to explain sex gaps. The identification of the role of these factors is necessary to inform policy.

Another study (Ruth & Colin, 2016) A survey of primary schools in England found that girls outperform boys in English across all phases (Ofsted in Moving English forward. Ofsted, Manchester, 2012). The gender gap remains an on-going issue in England, especially for

reading attainment. This paper presents evidence of gender differences in learning to read that emerged during the development of a reading scheme for 4- and 5-year-old children in which 372 children from Reception classes in sixteen schools participated in 12-month trials. There were three arms per trial: Intervention non-PD (non-phonically decodable text with mixed methods teaching); Intervention PD (phonically decodable text with mixed methods teaching); and "a business as usual" control condition SP (synthetic phonics and decodable text).

Assignment to Intervention condition was randomised. Standardised measures of word reading and comprehension were used. The research provides statistically significant evidence suggesting that boys learn more easily using a mix of whole-word and synthetic phonics approaches. In addition, the evidence indicates that boys learn to read more easily using the natural-style language of „real" books including vocabulary which goes beyond their assumed decoding ability. At post-test, boys using the nonphonically decodable text with mixed methods (Intervention A) were 8 months ahead in reading comprehension compared to boys using a wholly synthetic phonics approach.

When the findings of three previous studies were compared to those of the current study, it appeared that there is consistent evidence reported in international research that girls out perform boys on measures of reading in all age-groups. This is the same thing with the results of this research related to differences in recognition of the letters shows that girls are superior than boys for 4-5 year old children in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study mainly shows that there is a difference between knowing boys and girls in recognizing and interpreting the symbols of letters in children aged 4-5 years. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by (Ruth Price-mohr 2016) who examines the synthetic phonics against children aged 4-5 years. The results show that there is a difference between boys and girls and reading and for girls is better than men.

This research shows that Reception-age children and boys in particular, make more progress in reading through the use of a more eclectic approach to the teaching of reading than is currently being advocated in schools. There was no evidence in any of these studies that children were confused by using more than one strategy to read. In short, the result of this study shows that girls aged 4-5 years are superior in recognizing and interpreting symbols of letters than boys aged 4-5 years in Yogyakarta.

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