

EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERACTIVE BOOK READING IN EARLY YEARS TO FACILITATE PRINT KNOWLEDGE AND ORAL LANGUAGE: PERCEPTION OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to study the perception of parents and teachers towards interactive book reading and effectiveness in facilitating oral language and print awareness amongst senior kindergarten preschoolers. 30 senior kindergarten preschool teachers and 30 parents of preschoolers participated in the study.

A self-constructed questionnaire and rating scale were employed with high reliability and construct validity to gather information about the perceptions of senior kindergarten preschool teachers and parents toward interactive book reading.

Results show that there is significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers towards language skills acquired during interactive book reading. More parents believe that greater language skills get developed during interactive book reading as compared to teachers. There is no significant difference in the perception of parents and teachers towards effectiveness of interactive book reading. Both parents and teachers equally believe that interactive book reading is effective in early years.

1. Introduction

Interactive book reading is a reading strategy intended to promote the development of language and literacy skills in young children. When reading in an "interactive" manner, teachers engage in discussion with children about the book being read. Teacher asks children open-ended questions and encourages them to make use of vocabulary from the book. The strategy is similar to that of dialogic reading, but, whereas adults generally work one-on-one or in small groups with children when engaging in dialogic reading, interactive reading is an appropriate teaching method for use of whole classes. A major goal of interactive book reading is providing children with multiple opportunities to use book-related word. Once children enter preschool, interactive book reading is a prime opportunity to build vocabulary and content knowledge. By embedding specific strategies into the book-reading process, teachers can help bridge not only the word gap but also the world gap that many children from low-income homes enter school with. Living in poverty often limits children's access to world experiences, which in turn limits their knowledge and puts them at risk for underachievement and comprehension difficulties. The effectiveness of interactive book reading is influenced by the way that children are read to and the interactions that occur around the actual book-reading itself. Studies shows that young children and teachers typically spend time engaged in conversations, and yet, interactive book-reading practices that allow children to respond and discuss important connections between words and concepts are crucial

Story books contain clues that help one to understand the meaning of unknown words and, therefore, interactive book reading provides a tool for the promotion of language development. Positive effect of interactive book reading, either with parents or teachers, on children's receptive and expressive language development, such as growth of vocabulary, and grammar skills, have been reported frequently (Bus, 1995; Neuman, 1996; Senechal, 1996; Wasik & Bond, 2001; DeTemple & Snow, 2003; Ennemoser, 2013). Aside from its effects on the development of spoken language skills, early interactive book reading was also shown to have a positive effect on later literacy development (Mol & Bus, 2011; Sim & Berthelsen, 2014).

The purpose of an interactive reading is to provide opportunities for students to engage with texts through listening and discussion to promote deeper understanding about the meaning of texts and print. They can also learn skills and strategies to use in their own reading (Wiseman, 2011).

"When we read aloud to children, we fill the air and their ears with the sound of language" (Laminack & Wadsworth, 2006). Furthermore, Meyer, Stahl, and Wardop (1994) share that conversations during interactive reading promote and develop students' vocabulary and comprehension. They contend that interactive reading promotes oral language experiences such as they lead to

whole class conversations around text through Grand Conversations and whole class debates. Additionally, Fountas & Pinnell (2006) agree that interactive reading help develop students' ability to listen, speak and promote language development.

2. Interactive book reading supports Print Awareness

Preschool years have an impact role on children's emergent literacy and these years are critical for developing print awareness and transitioning to formal reading (Pullen & Justice, 2003). Therefore, children need more opportunities for learning about print awareness. Children's books provide children exposure to print language, such as labels and sings, so that they can learn more print features with books (Neuman & Roskos 1997). Used print features like isolate words or letters, punctuation marks help to children understanding concepts about print.

Sulzby (1985) found and described the developmental process around children's storybook reading. The more children have experiences with storybooks, the more they have opportunity to build their reading ability. In this process, they can first use the books' pictures as an important factor for building the story, and then they can begin to use print knowledge in their developmental reading process.

3. METHODOLOGY

4. Objectives

1. To find out the perception of teachers towards interactive book reading.
2. To find out the perception of parents towards interactive book reading.
3. To find out different language skills developed in pre-school children during interactive book reading sessions according to parents and teachers.

5. Operational Definitions

a) **Interactive Book Reading:** Interactive book reading was defined as a teacher/parent child activity during which a parent (a) examined a storybook and pointed out its main parts, (b) labelled and discussed picture content, (c) read aloud the story to the child, and (d) paused to question the child about his or her understanding.

b) **Print Awareness:** Print awareness is a child's earliest understanding that picture and written language carries meaning.

c) **Oral language:** Oral language is the system through which we use spoken words to express knowledge, ideas, and feelings.

6. DATA COLLECTION

Sample: For the present qualitative study, purposive sampling technique was used. The participants included were 30 parents of senior kindergarten preschool children and 30 senior kindergarten preschool teachers from aided and unaided schools from western suburbs of Mumbai.

Tool

A Self- constructed tool to study the perspectives of senior kindergarten preschool teachers and parents of the preschoolers on effectiveness of interactive book reading with regards to oral language and print awareness. This tool consisted of 2 questions and 26 statements. The questions sought to find out the frequency of interactive book reading in one month and on language skills acquired during interactive book reading. The questionnaire further had 10 statements on interactive reading 8 statements on oral language and 8 statements on print awareness. Across each statement participants were asked to put tick mark (☐) on a 5-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Date Collection

The questionnaires were distributed to the teachers of senior kindergarten preschool and parents of preschoolers.

Data Analysis

Data attained from the questionnaires was tabulated across varied variables. Percentages were calculated to measure the frequency of interactive book reading for teachers and parents. Standard deviation (SD) was used to measure language skills acquired during interactive book reading according parents and teachers.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Frequency of interactive book reading session at home

| Frequency of book reading | Percent | |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|
| 01. None | 3 | 10.0 |
| 02. Daily | 10 | 33.3 |
| 03. once a week | 6 | 20.0 |
| 004. thrice a week | 11 | 36.7 |
| Total | 30 | 100.0 |

The above table indicates that 36.7% of parents had interactive book reading session thrice a week, 33.3% of parents conduct interactive book reading session daily, 20% parents conduct interactive book session once a week, and 10% of parents do not have any interactive book reading with their children at home.

Table 2: Language skills acquired by children according to parents

| Sr. no | Type of skills | Yes | No |
|--------|--|-----|----|
| 1 | Letter recognition | 25 | 5 |
| 2 | Recognition of capital and small letters | 23 | 7 |
| 3 | Word recognition | 18 | 12 |
| 4 | Number recognition | 23 | 7 |
| 5 | Symbol recognition | 10 | 20 |
| 6 | Matching word with pictures | 16 | 14 |
| 7 | Reading | 18 | 12 |
| 8 | Picture recognition | 16 | 14 |
| 9 | Development of vocabulary | 21 | 9 |
| 10 | Fluency in speech | 10 | 20 |
| 11 | Speaks easily | 21 | 9 |
| 12 | Makes short stories | 17 | 13 |
| 13 | Follow simple commands/instructions | 16 | 14 |
| 14 | Communicate with others | 21 | 9 |
| 15 | Presenting thoughts in an organized manner | 7 | 23 |
| 16 | Sequential thinking | 6 | 24 |
| 17 | Others | 0 | 0 |

The above table indicates that many parents believe that letter recognition language skill of children gets enhanced during interactive book reading. Many parents also believe that recognition of capital and small letters, number recognition, development of vocabulary, fluent speaking, communicating with others, word recognition, reading, matching words with picture, and follow simple instructions all this language skills develops in children during interactive book reading.

Table 3: Mean and SD of effectiveness of interactive book reading according to gender

| Parent gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Male | 6 | 83.84 | 4.24 |
| Female | 24 | 80.80 | 6.05 |
| Total | 30 | 81.41 | 5.80 |

The above table indicates that mean score of male parents is 83.84 with SD 4.24 is higher than female parents' mean score 80.80 with SD 6.05. Figures in the above table indicate that more fathers believe that effectiveness of interactive book reading is higher in early years than mothers.

Table 4: Mean and SD of effectiveness of interactive book reading according to age of parents

| Age Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Up to 30 yrs. | 8 | 80.28 | 5.36 |
| Above 30 yrs. | 22 | 81.81 | 6.02 |
| Total | 30 | 81.41 | 5.80 |

The above table indicates that mean scores of parents above 30 years of age is higher than mean scores of parents up to 30 years. Figures in the above table indicate that parents above 30 years perceive that effectiveness of interactive book reading is higher in early years as compared to younger parents.

Table 5: Mean and SD of Language skills acquired according to occupation of parents

| Parent Occupation | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Service | 15 | 81.64 | 4.37 |
| Home Makers | 14 | 80.60 | 6.99 |
| Self employed | 1 | 89.23 | . |
| Total | 30 | 81.41 | 5.80 |

The above table indicates that the mean scores of parents in service is higher than mean score of self-employed parents and of parents who are homemakers. Figures in the above table indicate that more parents doing service believe that language skills get developed during interactive book reading than parents who are self-employed and home makers.

Table 6: Mean and SD of effectiveness of interactive book reading according to qualification

| Qualification | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------|----|-------|----------------|
| SSC | 8 | 81.15 | 8.32 |
| HSC | 9 | 81.19 | 5.84 |
| Graduates | 10 | 83.07 | 2.71 |
| Post graduates | 3 | 77.17 | 5.87 |
| Total | 30 | 81.41 | 5.80 |

The above table indicates that mean score of graduate parents is higher than mean score of parents who had completed HSC, parents who had completed SSC, post graduate parents. Figures in the above table indicate that parent who are graduates perceive that the effectiveness of interactive book reading is higher in early years than parents who have completed post graduation, HSC and SSC.

Table 7: Language skills acquired by children during early years according to teachers

| Sr no | Type of skills | Yes | No |
|-------|--|-----|----|
| 1 | Letter recognition | 16 | 14 |
| 2 | Recognition of capital and small letters | 13 | 17 |
| 3 | Word recognition | 14 | 16 |
| 4 | Number recognition | 12 | 18 |
| 5 | symbol recognition | 4 | 26 |
| 6 | Matching word with pictures | 11 | 19 |
| 7 | Reading | 14 | 16 |
| 8 | Picture recognition | 15 | 15 |
| 9 | Development of vocabulary | 13 | 17 |
| 10 | Fluency in speech | 7 | 23 |
| 11 | Speaks easily | 9 | 21 |
| 12 | Makes short stories | 14 | 16 |
| 13 | Follow simple commands/instructions | 13 | 17 |
| 14 | Communicate with others | 11 | 19 |
| 15 | Presenting thoughts in an organized manner | 3 | 27 |
| 16 | Sequential thinking | 5 | 25 |
| 17 | Total | 0 | 0 |

The above table indicates that many teachers believe that letter recognition develops in children during interactive book reading as well as many teachers also believe that language skill such as picture recognition, word recognition, reading, making short stories, recognition of capital and small letters, development of vocabulary, follow simple commands also develop in children during interactive book reading session.

Table 8: Effectiveness of interactive book reading according to teachers

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------|----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Interactive book Reading | 30 | 69.23 | 96.15 | 81.66 | 8.47 |

The above table indicates that mean score of perception of teachers towards effectiveness of interactive book reading is 81.66 with SD 8.47.

Table 9: Mean and SD of language skills acquired according to work experience of teachers

| Experience | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Up to 5 yrs | 20 | 24.41 | 25.83 |
| More than 5 yrs | 10 | 55.29 | 17.58 |
| Total | 30 | 34.70 | 27.43 |

The above table indicates that mean scores of teachers having more than 5 years of work experiences is higher than mean score of teachers having 5 years of work experience. Figures in the above table indicate that more experienced teachers believe that more language skills get developed during interactive book reading than the less experienced teachers.

Table 10: Mean and SD of Effectiveness of interactive book reading according to work experience of teachers

| Experience | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|------------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Up to 5 yrs. | 20 | 83.26 | 9.19 |
| More than 5 yrs. | 10 | 78.46 | 5.98 |
| Total | 30 | 81.66 | 8.47 |

The above table indicates that mean score of teachers having just 5 years of work experience is higher than mean score of teachers having more than 5 years of work experience. Figures in the above table indicate that less experienced teachers believe interactive book reading is effective in early years than more experienced teachers

Table 11: ANOVA and F-test for comparing parents and teachers' perception towards language skills acquired

| | Sum of Squares | Degree of freedom | Mean Square | F-calculated | p-value |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|---------|
| Between Groups | 4988.093 | 1 | 4988.093 | 8.223 | .006 |
| Within Groups | 35184.493 | 58 | 606.629 | | |
| Total | 40172.586 | 59 | | | |

The above table indicates that calculated p-value for F-test is 0.006. It is less than standard p-value 0.05 (5 % level of significance). Therefore F-test is rejected. There is significant difference in mean scores of language skills acquired by children according to parents and teachers.

Table 12: ANOVA and F-test for comparing parents and teachers' perception towards effectiveness of interactive book reading

| | Sum of Squares | Degree of freedom | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .986 | 1 | .986 | .019 | .892 |
| Within Groups | 3059.369 | 58 | 52.748 | | |
| Total | 3060.355 | 59 | | | |

The above table indicates that calculates p-value for F-test is 0.892. It is more than standard p-value 0.05 (5% level of significance). Therefore F-test is accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in mean scores of interactive book reading according to parents and teachers.

8. Conclusion.

This research study was conducted to understand perception of preschool teachers and parents of Senior Kindergarten children towards effectiveness of interactive book reading in early years to facilitate print knowledge and oral language.

There is difference in perception of teachers and parents towards language skills acquired during interactive book reading. Parents believe that more language skills get developed during interactive book reading as compared to teachers.

Parents and teachers both equally believe that interactive book reading is effective in early years.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS and TEACHERS

Main Goals:

- Encouraging child interest in book and in sharing them.
- Learning about new words, ideas and concepts, especially those that broaden child's world and stimulate their imagination.
- Understanding the meaning of print.

10. HOW TO SHARE BOOKS WITH A PRESCHOOLER:

- **Let children choose the book:** Allowing your child to choose the book you read ensures that your child is truly interested.
- **Let children hold the book and turn the pages:** Children love to be actively involved and to have some control over the book reading. The goal is to make the book an enjoyable experience and reading every page isn't a "must" at this stage Let children "read" the book in their own way: Some children look at a few pages or flip through the book for a few moments. Others want to look at the entire book. Let children look at the book at their own pace and according to their interests.
- **Tell the story:** Teacher/ parent doesn't have to read every word on the page. Teacher/parent can simplify the story, or just talk about the pictures and not read the words.
- **Keep things the same:** Some children love to look at the same book over and over again. There's no need to discourage this. The repetition and familiarity help child learn new words and better understand the concepts within the book.
- **Wait:** After you have either turned the page or read one page, wait silently and avoid asking questions or pointing out anything particular on that page. Your goal is to give your child an opportunity to express her/himself and take turns with you.
- **Try acting it out:** Once a story is familiar to the child, she/he may enjoy acting out the story with actions or props.
- **Use a variety of words:** Try to avoid just naming the pictures in the book as this will result in your child being exposed to mostly nouns (names of things). While nouns are important, your child also needs to be exposed to words that describe (e.g. "messy", "sticky", "enormous"), action words ("climb", "fly", "yell", "see"), words for feelings ("grumpy", "excited", "tired"), location words ("beside", "under", "through"), words about time ("soon", "later", "after"), etc.

- **Highlight important words:** Emphasize the most important words (the ones that are key to your child understanding the information on the page) with your voice, slowing down, and showing a picture in the book which demonstrates the meaning of the word. Repeat these new words often when talking about the story and in everyday life. This will help your child remember these new words and possibly begin to use them himself.
- **Expand child's message:** When child says something about the book, you can respond by elaborating on his message. For example, if she/he says "there's a frog" while pointing to a picture of a frog jumping between lily pads, you can expand by saying "yes, the frog is jumping on the lily pads!" Adding on to child's idea shows child how to produce longer sentences and gives her more information about the topic.
- **Build child's understanding:** Child will gain a better understanding of her/his experiences and her/his world when you draw connections between the book and their life. For example, if you look at a book about a trip to the doctor, you can talk about a recent visit that child had to the doctor.
- **Build child's imagination:** Books offer a great opportunity to add language that introduces imaginary concepts to the child.

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