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فاعليه استخدام طريقه "المنتسوري" في تحسين مستوي طلاب رياض الاطفال في مهارتي
التحدث والقراءه

The Effect of Using Montessori Method on Developing Kindergartener's Speaking and Reading skills

بحث مقدم لاستكمال متطلبات الحصول علي درجه الماجستيرفي التربيه
تخصص مناهج وطرق تدريس لغه انجيزيه

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Introduction

Language learning opportunities occur naturally when the young learners work and play with native English speakers. As children also like to play and have fun, the learning and teaching processes should be suited to their nature. There is a number of known interesting learning activities which are based on the arts, games and other oral activities. Thus English should be taught as a means of communication and researchers should do their best to help EFL learners to develop their reading and speaking skills.

Ur (2000: 12) declared that "out of all the four skills ,listening, speaking, reading and writing, speaking seems the most important, people who speak a language are known as speakers of the language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing a target language" Today, many second language learners give the speaking skill priority in their learning because if they master this skill then they will be considered as if they have mastered all of the other skills.

The importance of speaking is best shown with the integration of the other language skills. For instance, speaking can help students develop their vocabulary and grammar and improve their writing skill. Ability to read is the primary fundamental skill required for children to achieve academic success. Currently, the expectation is that all children should begin reading early and be able to read on grade level by third grade (U.S. Department of Education, 2002)

Another way that speaking and reading are connected is through decoding .decoding is the process of pulling apart the sounds that each

letter makes, and then putting them back together to make a word. It is much easier for a child to sound out a word on the page that they have already heard in conversation, than a completely new word. There is less information to process since the meaning and the pronunciation of the word are already known. A child who has heard more words spoken is at an advantage when learning to read, the skill of reading is special and often difficult to acquire. The fact that anyone learns how to read is something of a miracle. Learning to read is different from learning to speak; in the development of human history, speaking precedes reading by thousands of years.

Italian educator and physician Maria Montessori developed an innovative teaching methodology for children that left an indelible mark on education curricula throughout the world. Montessori education is a sensory-based pedagogy that is based on the belief that children learn at their own pace through manipulation of objects (Lopata, Wallace, & Finn, 2005). According to Montessori, (Montessori, 1967, p.14). the goal of education is “to be able to find activities that are so intrinsically meaningful that we want to throw ourselves into them” (Crain : 2004) confirmed this assertion by noting that “when children find tasks that enable them to develop their naturally emerging capacities, they become interested in them and concentrate deeply on them.

In general, there is a need for more research regarding successful educational methods and pedagogy for this disenfranchised population because the existing research does not adequately provide educational planners with the resources or information to develop effective programs (Williams:2001) examined the impact of the Montessori Method on

refugee children's social, cognitive and motor development using a difference-in-difference approach .The Montessori method of teaching aimed the fullest possible development of the whole child, ultimately preparing him for life's many rich experiences. Complemented by her training in medicine, psychology and anthropology, Dr .Maria Montessori (1870-1952) developed her philosophy of education based upon actual observation of children.

Students are assigned their own personal workstations designed with educational items that correspond to the daily lesson plans and activities. Students are responsible for setting up the work area, choosing the learning activity, applying the physical materials, and returning the materials back to the shelves (Pickering: 2004).Children are always free to move around the room and are not given deadlines for the various learning tasks. Desks are arranged into open networks that encourage meaningful group discourse, as well as independent learning.

Students work together with the teachers to organize time strategically in order to complete the necessary learning tasks of the day. The amount of teachers in the classroom varies based on class size, but usually two teachers are used for sections with thirty or more students, In most settings, children are grouped in mixed ages and abilities based on three to six-year increments such as 0-3, 3-6, 6-12, 12-15 and 15-18 (other Montessori schools use only three year increment settings). Ages are mixed so that older students can assist and mentor the younger children in the group. Students are grouped according to common interests and experiences rather than the ability and skill level (Pickering: 2004).

According to Montessori, from birth to age three the child learns primarily through the "unconscious absorbent mind." During education in

the first three years, Montessori believed that it was necessary for the parents to develop in the role of unobtrusive educator; there to protect and guide without infringing on the child's right to self-discovery (Crain: 2004).

This early developmental model enabled children to learn their own skills at their own place. During the ages of three to six the child begins to utilize the "conscious absorbent mind" which prompts students to participate in creative problem-solving consisting of wooden and metal objects of various sizes and shapes, personally designed by Montessori. If a problem becomes too difficult or overwhelming for the student, the teacher delays the project for a future day. Children also engage in practical work consisting of household tasks and personal maintenance.

Context of the problem

In spite of the importance of EFL reading and speaking skills, there are short comings in teaching these English language skills in most kindergartens. To make sure of this problem the researcher conducted a pilot study on a sample of forty children of second year in kindergarten.

They were selected randomly from Fatma EL-Zahra Language school in EL-Sadat City .The purpose of piloting the test was to examine the reliability, the clarity and suitability of its items, to time the test, to determine the coefficient of ease and difficulty and to ensure item discrimination. The pilot sample wasn't included in the main experiment as the program was applied in another school with other kindergarteners.

The results of the pilot study revealed that the children's speaking and reading skills were very weak. The researcher interviewed some teachers and inspectors of kindergarteners. They asserted the weaknesses in the kindergarteners' English curriculum which neglected the development of the

reading and speaking skills. Consequently, the children have weak reading and speaking skills. This problem might have been due to the traditional methods used in teaching the children which were based on repetition and silent classes and in which the teacher's voice was dominant. This pilot study consisted of three sections:

The first section: dealt with the kindergarteners' reading skill, An EFL reading test was used (Appendix D) to find out their difficulties in EFL indicated that the majority (83.3%) of the kindergarteners were weak in EFL reading skills the kindergartener could not:

- Understand how to hold and open a book correctly.-
- Distinguish between print and pictures.
- Turn the pages and track print from left to right and top and down.
- Discriminate between a letter, word ,space and sentences
- Match voice with print.
- Match one to one correspondence.
- Identify high frequency words
- Differentiate between capital letters and small letters
- Read the alphabet with visual support
- Read his name.
- Connect words with pictures.
- Use strategies such as re -reading and reading for details
- Identify the main idea, compare and retelling.
- Respond to illustration in a book(pointing to pictures
- Retell the story.

- Identify text features specific to the topic as titles, headings, and pictures.
- Discuss the characters setting and events.
- Ask and answer questions about what is read.

The second section: dealt with the speaking skills ,An EFL speaking test was used to (Appendix F) to find out their difficulties in EFL indicated that the majority (83.3%) of the kindergarteners were weak in EFL reading skills the kindergartener could not:

- Recognize words begin with the same intimal sound in an literal phrase or sentences.
- Substitute an intimal sound to create a new words:(change beginning sound in "mat" to make "bat"
- Pronounce the individual sounds of alphabet. end words into syllables(e.g pen-cil/penci)
- Identify words with the same beginning consonants sound in a series of words(fan-fit-fun)
- Use words to describe/name location, size, color, and shape.
- Begin to discriminate between spoken sentences, words, and syllables.
- Participate in a short conversation.
- Identify words that have the same rhyme.
- Initiate conversations with classmates and teacher -
- Join in with conversations started by others.-

The third section: the third part of the pilot study was about Montessori Method (Appendix H), was used to detect the Montessori classes the findings indicated that (76.6%) of the kindergartener responded positively to the items that indicate some speaking and reading skills

Statement of the problem

The problem of the study was the weakness of EFL second year kindergarten in reading and speaking skill .

Questions of the study

The present research was an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the EFL speaking skills suitable for kindergartner?
2. What is the effect of Montessori of Method on developing some of EFL speaking skills?
3. What are the EFL reading skills suitable for kindergartener?
4. What is the effect of the Montessori Method on developing EFL reading skills?

Delimitations of the study

The current study is delimited to:

- A sample of kindergarten student at Fatma El-Zahra Language School
- Some EFL reading and speaking skills
- The first term of the academic year 2018/2019

Instruments and Materials of the study

The present study researcher prepared and used the following tools and material:

1. An EFL Speaking checklist
2. An EFL pre-post speaking test
3. An EFL Reading checklist
4. An EFL pre-post reading test

5. Montessori Method (innervation)
6. A teacher's guide

Participants of the study

The participants of the present study were forty students enrolled in the second year of kindergarten, Fatma EL-Zahra Language School, Sadat City, Minufiya.

Significance of the study

The present study is significant as it was represented in what it offered for the following groups:

1. For Kindergarteners

The Montessori method of teaching aims for the fullest possible development of the whole child, ultimately preparing him for life's many rich experiences. Complemented by her training in medicine, psychology and anthropology, Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) developed her philosophy of education based upon actual observation of children pass through sensitive periods of development early in life. Dr. Maria Montessori described the child's mind between the time of birth and six years of age as the "absorbent mind". It is during this stage that a child has a tremendous ability to learn and assimilate from the world around him, without conscious effort, during this time, children are particularly receptive to certain external stimuli. A Montessori teacher recognizes and takes advantage of these highly perceptive stages through the introduction of materials and activities which are specially designed to stimulate the intellect. Encourage to focus her attention on one particular quality, the child works at her own optimum level –

in an environment where beauty and orderliness are emphasized and appreciated. A spontaneous love of "work" is revealed as the child is given the freedom (within boundaries) to make her own choices. Some children have more than others learning to read, some children are simply ready to read later than others .some may be 6 before they are fully capable of learning to read, this is due to The fact that there are multiple skill necessary to learn to read and they each have their own developmental timeline which can vary greatly from one child to another and yet all (fast, medium, slow)are within normal limits. Some children may have what are known as specific learning disabilities such as problems with auditory or visual perception. delayed language development, impairment in working memory or processing speed. if the child is reading below grade level you should talk to your school and/or your child 's physician about getting a psycho-educational evaluation to determine if your child has learning disabilities. Some children may have a condition known as Dyslexia that will require a comprehensive reading program to provide the necessary support and instruction.

2. EFL Teachers

The primary role of a Montessori educator is to carefully observe while creating a cooperative and supportive setting that is well organized and aesthetically pleasing to the learners. The teacher performs the “overseer role” by directing the “spontaneous "actions of the students (Ruenzel, 1997). According to Montessori, "education is not something which the teacher does, but rather a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being” (Weissglass: 1999, p. 45).Montessori teachers introduce materials with a brief lesson and demonstration and then passively guide the audience through a period of student-centered inquiry.

The objective of the instructor is to motivate students, “allowing them to develop confidence and inner discipline so that there is less and less of a need to intervene as the child develops” (Edwards, 2002, p. 6). On average, the most teachers spend less than one hour of the daily class on group instruction (Lopata, Wallace & Finn, 2005).

The teachers make a link between the environment and the children but Montessori mentioned that teachers should minimize the interactions between children and adults during child play [Montessori, 1912/2003]. When the teacher has given the child a lesson about the materials, she then steps back to allow the child to work independently [Caldweel, Yussen, and Peterson, 1981; Iasaacs, 2007]. The lessons are offered when the child is ready to be introduced to a new aspect of learning [Standing, 1984, Iasaacs, 2007]. The teacher joins the child once an activity has been completed so that the teacher can talk about what the child's exploration has resulted in and discover his approach to solve the problem.

3. EFL Course Designers for kindergartener stage

As for the educational designers, it pays their attention to the importance of this initial stage in learning and how it effects on their following steps in education. In addition, the Montessori Method provides them with rich and valuable materials to promote the ESL/EFL to the kindergarteners. To clarify, it helps them in building an English curriculum based on many attractive approaches and materials which are used collectively and which are designed specifically to accelerate the acquisition of the SL. It also directs them to the vision that the implementation and integration of a variety of elements stems from the idea that the children is a complex and multifaceted being, so the curriculum should respond to their needs cognitively, effectively and physically.

Procedures of the study

1. Reviewing literature and previous studies related to reading, speaking skills and Montessori Method.
2. Preparing a reading and speaking skills checklist required for kindergarten and submitted it to a jury committee to validate it.
3. .Modifying the checklist according to the opinions of the jury members and putting it in its final form.
4. Designing pre-post reading tests according to the reading skills determined by the jury to verify the effect of Montessori Method submitting them to specialists to verify their content and validity.
5. Modifying the pre-post reading test according to the opinions of the specialists and putting them in the final forms.
6. Testing the reliability of the pre-post oral skills tests using Cronbach's Alpha correlation.
7. Designing pre-post speaking tests according to the speaking skills determined by the jury to verify the effect of Montessori Method submitting them to specialists to verify their content and validity.
8. Modifying the pre-post speaking test according to the opinions of the specialists and putting them in the final forms.
9. Testing the reliability of the pre-post speaking tests using Cronbach's Alpha correlation.
10. Developing the proposed method based on the Montessori Method.
11. Selecting a sample of twenty two kindergarten children randomly, they will be in one group as an experimental group.
12. Pre-testing both the experimental and the control group.
13. Teaching the proposed method by the researcher on the experimental group to develop their reading and speaking skills.

14. Administering the reading and speaking post-test after conducting the experiment.
15. Analyzing data statistically.
16. Interpreting the results and discussing them.
17. Providing the summary, giving recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Terminology

A- EFL Speaking Skill:

Azadi (2015) defined that speaking is one of four basic skills in learning foreign language besides listening, reading and writing. Normally, learners in an EFL context do not use the language in authentic situations. According to Kayi (2006) speaking referred to the gap between linguistic expertise and teaching methodology. Linguistic expertise concerns with language structure and language content. Teaching speaking is not like listening, reading, and writing. It needs habit formation because it is a real communication and speaking is a productive skill so it needs practicing as often as possible. Romero (2006) also stated that while adults find it difficult to achieve the ability to acquire and integrate complex data and cope with different aspects at the same time, children can do it unconsciously. One component of speaking that seems to be affected the most by age is pronunciation. (Kuhl, 2004, p.832) shown that young infants are especially sensitive to acoustic changes at the phonetic boundaries between categories. Also, children are especially good at redacting syllable chunks.

B-EFL Reading Skill

According to Anderson (2003:8), reading is the interaction of four things including the reader, the text, the fluent reading or the ability or read

at an appropriate rate with adequate comprehension, and strategic reading, or the ability of the reader to use a variety of reading strategies to accomplish a purpose for reading. Discovering the best methods and techniques or processes the learners choose to access, is the goal of research in reading strategies. In addition, reading is the kind of process in which one needs to not only understand its direct meaning, but also comprehend its implied ideas. It involved a great deal of cognitive capacity available for comprehension (Pressley: 2002). For example, good readers know that comprehension is most likely to occur from reading activity.

(Pressley: 2002) said that most good readers know how to relate what is being read to prior knowledge, how to predict what might be coming up in the text, and summarize what is being read. Reading is a lifelong skill to be used both at school and throughout life. According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, (1985) reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost despite its importance, reading is one of the most challenging areas in the education system.

C-The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method was a radical philosophy at the time which contradicted and challenged many of the existing beliefs about 'whole-class learning' the acquisition of knowledge and the development of early human cognition. Montessori believed that children were not a blank slate and that the traditional learning methods such as recitation, memorization and conditioning failed to develop necessary life skills and individual abilities. Montessori described traditional students as, "butterflies mounted on pins,

each fastened to their place spreading the useless wings of barren and meaningless knowledge which they have acquired” (Shute, 2002, p. 71). According to Montessori, from ages 2-6 children experience a socialization and, kinesiology need to be identified and strategically applied and advanced. According to (Montessori:1967, p.14). the goal of education is “to be able to find activities that are so intrinsically meaningful that we want to throw ourselves into them,(Crain :2004) confirmed this assertion by noting that when children find tasks that enable them to develop their naturally emerging capacities, they become interested in them and concentrate deeply on them

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, and the above mentioned conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested:

- a. Teachers should be aware of the importance of the Montessori Method in some developing kindergarten's reading skills.
- b. Teachers should be aware of the importance of the Montessori Method in some developing kindergarten's speaking skills.
- c. Immediate feedback should be given after each activity to enhance their student's learning
- d.** Good training should be given to the teachers and students to use Montessori Method

Suggestions for further Research

The following are suggestions for further research:

- The effectiveness of the Montessori Method on developing writing skills among primary pupils.
- Investigating the effectiveness of the Montessori Method on developing listening for kindergarteners.
- The importance of the Accelerative Integrated Method on developing students' attitudes, motivation, anxiety and confidence in learning EFL
- Using the Accelerative Integrated Method on the Acquisition of vocabulary or grammar in EFL for beginners.

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