

Study on the Experiment of Cultivating the Peer Interpersonal Skill of the Children in the Kindergarten

ZENG Bin^{[a],*}

^[a]Associate Professor, Preschool and Primary Education School, China West Normal University, Nanchong, China.

*Corresponding author.

Received 28 April 2016; accepted 2 June 2016
Published online 26 July 2016

Abstract

This purpose of research is that cultivating the peer interpersonal skill of the children in the kindergarten of the linguistic & non-linguistic competence, pro-social behavior & social obstacle. Research methods are on-the-spot experimental and observational method. The results are that the difference is significance in the total level of the children's peer interpersonal skill between the experimental group and the control group ($p < 0.05$), that the difference is significance in the linguistic & non-linguistic competence and the children's interaction obstacle between the experimental group and the control group ($p < 0.05$). But that the difference is no significance in the social initiative and pro-social between the experimental group and the control group ($p > 0.05$). The conclusion is that it is effective for teachers to intervene in children's peer interaction during the experiment. It can become the appropriate education measures to improve the peer interpersonal skill of the children in the kindergarten.

Key words: Children; Peer; Interpersonal skill

Zeng, B. (2016). Study on the Experiment of Cultivating the Peer Interpersonal Skill of the Children in the Kindergarten. *Canadian Social Science*, 12(7), 41-45. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/8684>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/8684>

INTRODUCTION

The peer interpersonal skill of children is taken more and more seriously by the academic community all over the

world. Chinese Ministry of Education also makes clear a regulation about it in "framework of education guidelines in the kindergarten", that it is an object to cultivate the ability of early children's interaction, such as liking interaction, learning help each other, cooperation, sharing, sympathy, that teacher should guide children learn the preliminary interpersonal skills, that teacher should try her or his best to provide children with interpersonal chance and condition in the interpersonal interaction and the mutual activity, that they should still direct children. Foreign research about it shows that the age of preschool is the best period of learning interpersonal behavior (Wang, 1993). The theory of social development founded by Judith Harris attaches importance to peer affecting children's development. She believes that companion has a far-reaching influence on the development of early child's personality in the future (Harris, 2005). Peer Interaction can help early children get rid of Self-Center. It can also make them form the emotional health, etc.. In fact, the peer interpersonal skill of children is not good in China. For example, the results that You (2001) investigated show that it is not high for the frequency of early children's interaction, that early children can't be good at interaction. The poor peer-relationships will bring early children negative influence during their development (Eisenberg, 1997). The research shows that the bad peer-relationships will affect the children's normal life now and in the future (Jing, 1998; Parker & Ahser, 1987; Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmidt, 1990). It is necessary to further study the ability of children's peer- interaction in order to improve the ability of their peer-interaction for their better life in the future.

The research purposes are that some suitable suggestion is given for teachers to train the peer interpersonal skill of early children, that the children's psychological theory becomes richer.

1. METHODS

This study method is mainly on-the-spot experiment. The peer interaction skills of the early children are cultivated in their real life and in their activities of area corners. The observational method is used to help complete the record of the experiment.

1.1 Research Objects

95 children are randomly selected from 31 children of one little class, 29 children of one middle class, 35 children of one big class in the kindergarten of provincial demonstration of Nanchong city, Sichuan province China as an experimental group before the experiment. At the same time, 87 children are randomly selected from 27 children of another little class, 28 children of another middle class, 32 children of another big class in the same kindergarten as a control group before the experiment. Some children coming halfway to the class are not included as research objects.

1.2 Test Tool

“Test questionnaire of children’s peer-interaction skills in the underdeveloped region (parents)” is self-made scale as a test tool because subject children in the underdeveloped regions are different from the children in the ordinary region. The questionnaire is revised on the basis of “test questionnaire of 4-5 years-old children’s peer-interaction skills” compiled by Zhang Yuan, according to teachers’ and parents’ description of the children’s interaction behavior at ordinary time by interview method, what’s more, according to local teaching characteristics and the results of our observing children and analyzing the suitability of each item. The questionnaire is made up of 24 items, including four dimensions: linguistic & non-linguistic ability, social initiative, pro-social behavior and social obstacle. The score of 5 grades from 1 to 5 by Likert’s scale is following: The most inconsistent, more *t* inconsistent, correspond, more correspondence, the most correspondence. The data of Social obstacle is conversely recorded. That is to say, the score is lower, the social barrier is lower. The scores of other dimensions are directly recorded. The Cronbach’s Alpha of the questionnaire is 0.857. The split-half reliability is 0.850. It shows that the validity of the questionnaire was reliable. The data processing happens by SPSS22.0.

1.3 The Contents of This Experiment

The first is that teachers require children to speak and smile politely to other children in the aspect of linguistic & non-linguistic ability. For examples, teachers lead children to say “good morning” to their peer who come to kindergarten a day, to say “good bye” to their peer who leave kindergarten a day, to say “sorry” to their peer whom when he or she bothers in the life activities a day, to say “thanks” to their peer who helps them, etc.. Teachers require children to smile politely while interacting with other children in the non-linguistic ability.

The second is that the content of experiment includes sharing and cooperation in pro-social behavior. Although pro-social behavior mainly include cooperation, sharing, help, sympathy and consultation etc., foreign study shows that the occurrence frequency of children’s cooperation is highest in the children’s pro-social behavior, that the occurrence frequency of other children’s pro-social behavior is lower than co-operation (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1980; Iannotti, 1985). The occurrence frequency of sharing and co-operation is higher than other pro-social behavior during the free activities of the children, according to our observation of the children’s pro-social behavior. Therefore, training children’s sharing and co-operation is the important content during this experiment. The detail arrangement is that children bring their books or toys to kindergarten from their home. They bring books this week. Then they bring toys for the next week. They may read their books with the other children, they may share their content of books with other children. They may lend their toys to other children during the course of the fixed corner activities a week. They take their books or toys to home after the activities.

The third is that teachers intervene in social obstacle between children by persuasion. The ways of the intervenor are language persuasion by enlightening, implying and encouraging.

2. EXPERIMENTAL PROCESS

2.1 The Arrange of the Experiment

Trying observing the children’s interactive behavior for a week, according to children’s the abilities of interaction in the “framework of education guidelines in the kindergarten” promulgated by the Chinese ministry of education, according to the state of children which teachers know. And then, the content of the experiment is formulated after discussion by children’s teachers in the classes and other researchers including graduate teacher and 6 postgraduates after trying observing the children. The experiment has been carried out for 14 weeks. Teachers cultivate children’s ability in language interaction in the everyday life of children. Teachers intervene in non-linguistic ability and social obstacle by help and guidance if the behavior of non-linguistic ability and social obstacle occurs. The pro-social behaviors of children are cultivated in the activities of area corner every week. Children’s the abilities of interaction between experimental group and control group are measured before the experiment and after experiment.

2.2 The Measured Result of Matched-Pair Analysis on the Peer Interaction of the Children Before Experiment

The peer interaction skills of children in the experimental group and control group are measured by “test

questionnaire of children’s peer-interaction skills in the underdeveloped region (parents)” before the experiment. The result in table 1 shows that it does not exist significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in total points and all the dimensions

between experimental group and control group. The reason may be that children are in the same kindergarten. Their education condition and teachers’ teaching standard are same between experimental group and control group.

Table 1:
Matched-Pair Analysis on the Peer Communication Ability of the Children Between Experimental Group and Control Group Before Experiment

Groups all dementions	Experimental group	Control group	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>M±SD</i> <i>N=95</i>	<i>M±SD</i> <i>N=87</i>		
L&LA	23.189±0.3974	23.1149±0.3516	0.139	0.89
SI	23.1724±0.4366	23.2414±0.4027	-0.12	0.903
PB	22.2184±0.3024	22.023±0.3235	0.419	0.676
SO	15.6437±0.3403	15.908±4.22	-0.481	0.632
TPPISC	84.2184±1.0310	84.2874±0.9139	-0.048	0.962

2.3 The Measured Result of the Measured Result of Matched-Pair Analysis on the Peer Interaction of the Children After Experiment

The peer interaction skills of the children in the experimental group and control group are measured by “test questionnaire of children’s peer-interaction skills in the underdeveloped region (parents)” when the experiment is over. The purpose is to know whether the experimental content is valid or not. The result in Table 2 shows that it exists significant difference in total points ($t = 2.346, p = 0.021, p < 0.05$) of the peer interaction skills between experimental group and control group. It

exists (very) a significant difference in linguistic & non-linguistic ability ($t = 2.319, p = 0.023, p < 0.05$) and social obstacle ($t = 2.754, p = 0.007, p < 0.01$) between the experimental group and control group. The score of the experimental group in linguistic & non-linguistic ability is higher than the control group. The score of the experimental group in social obstacle is lower than the control group. It doesn’t exist a significant difference in the social initiative ($t=1.233, p=0.221, p > 0.05$) and pro-social behavior ($t=1.09, p=0.279, p > 0.05$) between the experimental group and control group.

Table 2
Matched-Pair Analysis on the Peer Communication Ability of the Children Between Experimental Group and Control Group After Experiment

Groups all dementions	Experimental group	Control group	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>M±SD</i> <i>N=95</i>	<i>M±SD</i> <i>N=87</i>		
L&LA	23.00±3.080	21.91±3.496	2.319	0.023*
SI	22.67±3.633	21.97±3.987	1.233	0.221
PB	21.98±2.715	21.56±2.956	1.09	0.279
SO	22.34±3.517	26.33±4.221	2.754	0.007**
TPPISC	89.99±10.383	86.26±12.018	2.346	0.021*

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The Results Show That Teachers’ Intervention Can Improve the Children’ Peer Interaction Skills Through the Experiment

Peer interaction skills are the necessary ability during the course of individual development. It is also one of the basic qualities of modern people. Whether children can smoothly interact with the other children or not, it reflects the suitable ability of the children, it determines the

quality of life of the individual (Li, 2015). The result in Table 2 shows that it exists significant difference in total points ($p < 0.05$) of the peer interaction skills between experimental group and control group. That is to say, the peer interaction skills of the experimental group are better than the control group. The result is consistent with the action effect. The result which action leads to in the action effect may make the individual change greatly (Tao et al., 2011). The experiment improves the overall level of the children’s peer interaction.

3.2 It Is Effective to Require the Children Speak and Smile Politely in Order to Improve the Level of the Children's Peer Interaction

It exists significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in linguistic & non-linguistic ability of the children's peer interaction. That is to say, linguistic & non-linguistic ability of the experimental group is higher than the control group. The ways are mainly to say polite language to their peer and to smile to them. The dialogue between children's companion reflects the process of children's peer interaction. It is the good way to cultivate children's social behavior and social emotions (Nie & Huang, 2003). But now many children lack the most basic politeness, such as saying bad language, rude and disrespect, etc.. A person is difficult to keep a foothold in the society and become a social useful talent if he or she has not the most basic manners. So it is necessary to cultivate the children's politeness. The children interact with other children, express their thoughts and demand other people politely. They can be accepted by other people like this (Zheng, 2014). It is good to improve the children's overall level of their interaction if they form a rich social experience. This result is consistent with the result studied by Mingjie Guo. That is to say, it is effective to cultivate the children's interpersonal skill for intervention. This study proved her idea that teacher should provide language environment for the children speak politely (Guo, 2005). It explains that it is very effective that teachers require the children say polite language and smile to companion in order to improve the children's linguistic & non-linguistic ability.

3.3 It Is Valid to Persuade Children With Social Handicap to Communicate by Inspiration, Suggestion and Encourage Language

Social obstacle is the action that the individual cannot interact or play effectively with others person, that they often stay alone (Zhang, 2009). Social obstacle here mainly includes two aspects of content. The first is that children with lack interaction are intervened. Social obstacle is divided into lack interaction and improper interaction by Zhang (2009). Children with lack interaction are divided into the type of quietness and loneliness that children don't like interacting and the type of silence that children look on the side or do nothing. The children with lack interaction are chosen because there are children with lack interaction and there is few children with improper interaction that children have much action of hyperactivity, overbearing and attack in the kindergarten. Therefore, children with the type of quietness and loneliness and the type of silence are intervened. The second is that children with social shrinking are intervened. Zheng and Qiu (1995) think social shrinking children have early performance of avoiding, less words and timid. They will be rejected and isolated by the other children if they become a group of deviating from the norm (Zheng & Zhang, 2003).

So social shrinking is intervened as a part content of social obstacle. The result of the experiment shows that it exists very significant difference in the social barrier of the children between experimental group and control group ($p < 0.01$). That is to say, it is effective to help the children with quietness-loneliness and passive interaction by care and guidance of teachers in order to change the interpersonal skill of the children with social obstacle. In fact, this course is one-to-one tutoring for the children with social barriers. This proves that Li (2015) proposed that teacher should tutor one to one of the children with social obstacle in 2015. The result is also consistent with the idea of Zhang and Gao (2015) that teacher should intervene the interaction of the children at the right time in 2015. It is clear that the third item of the intervention measures is effective. That is to say, the experiment is completed by directing or guiding the children with quietness-loneliness and passive interaction. This can change the children with social barriers. It is good to improve the overall level of the children's peer interpersonal skill.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

It is very effective for the teacher to cultivate the peer interpersonal skill of the children in linguistic & non-linguistic ability and social obstacle. Teachers don't take the peer interpersonal skill of the children very seriously in the practical work of kindergarten, although teachers know the rules in the framework of education guidelines in the kindergarten. The teachers ignore even cultivating the peer interpersonal skill of the children. This is not obviously good to improve it. The effect is obvious to cultivate it in a daily life or activities of the children. The teachers require the children to pay attention to their talk and action, to be polite to the other as much as possible in linguistic & non-linguistic ability. It is suggested that teachers should pay more attention to the children with loneliness and passive interaction, to guide them, to help them.

REFERENCES

- Coie, J. D., Dodge, K. A., & Kupersmidt, J. B. (1990). Peer group behavior and social status. In S. R. Asher & J. D. Coie (Eds.), *Peer rejection in childhood* (pp.17-59). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenberg, N. (1997). Social emotional and personality development. In W. Damon (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 3, pp.620-622). New York: Wiley.
- Eisenberg, N., & Lennon, R. (1980). Altruism and assessment of empathy in the preschool year. *Child Development*, 51, 552-557.
- Guo, M. J. (2005). Study on the development feature and cultivation of 3 to 6 years-old children's interaction strategies. *Journal of Tianjin Normal University (Elementary Education Edition)*, (3), 71.

- Harris, J. R. (2005). Social behaviors and personality development: The role of experience with siblings and with peers. In J. E. Bruce & D. Bjorklund (Eds.), *Origins of the social mind: Evolutionary psychology and child development*. (pp.245-270). NewYork, NY, US: Guilford Press.
- Iannotti, R. J. (1985). Naturalistic and structured assessments of prosocial behavior in preschool children: The influence of empathy and perspective taking. *Developmental Psychology*, 21, 46-55.
- Jing, J. H. (1998). A preliminary study on the problems of the development of children's peer relationship affecting their socialization. *Psychological Exploration*, (2), 68.
- Li, M. (2015). On the cause of children's interaction obstacles and the strategy of psychological counseling. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (11), 64.
- Li, M. (2015). On the cause of children's interaction obstacles and the strategy of psychological counseling. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (11), 66.
- Nie, L., & Huang, K. K. (2003). On teachers as supporters and conductor of children's peer dialogue. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (12), 45.
- Parker, J. G., & Ahser, S. P. (1987). Peer relations and later personal adjustment: Are low-accepted children at risk. *Psychology Bulletin*, 102, 357-389.
- Suo, T., et al. (2011). On the sense of responsibility control action effect and the prove of ERP. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, (12), 1431.
- Wang, X. (1993). Comparative study on intercourse psychology of 4 to 6 years-old children of the cities between China's main nationality and Mongolian. *Psychological Exploration*, (2), 21.
- You, X. H. (2001). Investigation and analysis on the interpersonal skill of children and influence factor of family. *Shandong Education*, 7(8), 536-537.
- Zhang, G. L. (2009). Peer interaction among different ages: A valid way of perfecting the children with social obstacle. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (11), 52.
- Zhang, G. L. (2009). Peer interaction among different ages: A valid way of perfecting the children with social obstacle. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (11), 52-53.
- Zhang, L. L., & Gao, D. H. (2015). On the characteristics and reason analysis of peer interaction in the class. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (4), 66.
- Zheng, L. (2014). Resource-based view of linguistic and children's linguistic education. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (10), 13.
- Zheng, X. B., & Qiu, S. H. (1995). Talking about correction of children's social shrinking. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (6), 35.
- Zheng, S. J., & Zhang, Y. H. (2003). Research review on preschool children's social shrinking. *Journal of Studies Childhood Education*, (3), 16.