Self Concept and Language Development in Two Dyslexic Children Between The Ages of 6 and 12

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Abstract: Self-concept is the image that people have about themselves. Each person has both positive and negative self-concept, including children with dyslexia who face obstacle in language development. This research aims to characterize self-concept and language development in two dyslexic children between the ages of 6 and 12. This research applies qualitative case study methodology. The data were collected using the attitude scale and observation. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics technique. The subjects of this research were two dyslexic children. The result of the research shows that (1) SK, 7 years old dyslexic child who has below average language development and low self-concept; (2) YD, 9 years old dyslexic child who also has below average language development and low self-concept.

Keywords: self-concept, language development, dyslexia

1. Introduction

Self-concept is the image that people have about themselves. Self-concept is the consolidation of a belief that people have about themselves including a number of physical characteristic, psychologist, social and emotional, aspiration and achievement (Hurlock, 1999). Martin (2015) adds that self-concept is people's actions and experience to understand the concept of themselves as a source of motivation and psychological resilience. Further, Rosenberg defines self-concept as the totality of individual thoughts and feelings to understand him/her.

In a various number of definitions about self-concept, there are physical and psychological aspects. The physical aspect consists of the concept that the individual possesses about his/her appearance, his/her sexual appropriateness, the significance of his/her body in relation to his/her behavior, and the prestige his/her body gives in the eyes of others. Meanwhile, the psychological aspect consists of the individual's concepts of ability and inadequacy, self-worth, and relationships with others (Hurlock, 1999).

Self-concept affects the improvement of language development. With the language, children are able to recognize their marks and their labels (Rochat, 2010). Language is one of

the humans' essential abilities which allow humans to be superior to other beings on earth. Language is a communication tool in the form of oral, written or sign based on particular system of the symbols. Language helps us to describe past events and plan future events (Santrock, 2007). According to Lerner, language is one of integrated communication systems which includes speaking, reading, and writing (Abdurrahman, 2012). In using the language, a person is expected to fulfill a number of abilities, including: the ability to understand the meaning of someone's, the development of vocabulary, the arrangement of words into sentences, and utterances (Jahja, 2011).

There are five rules system in the language, as follows: (1) phonology, sound system in a language and phoneme is a small unit of language; (2) morphology, the system of meaningful units involved in word formation; (3) syntax, the system involves how words can be combined into acceptable phrases and sentences; (4) semantics, the systems involves the meaning of words and sentences; (5) pragmatics, the system uses appropriate conversation and knowledge regarding the effective use of language in context (Abdurrahman, 2012; Santrock, 2007; Witt, Elliott, Daly, Gresham, & Kramer, 1998).

Santrock (2007) states that the language development of children in general can be divided into a number of stages, including: (1) from birth up to level one, children master the prerequisites for reading. Many children study left-to-right reading system, how to identify letters and alphabets, and how to write their names; (2) Levels 1 and 2, children begin to learn to read and acquire the ability to speak the words (translating letters into sounds and combining sounds into words), the children also can complement learning by names and letters; (3) Level 2 and 3, the children become more fluent in repeating each word and other reading skills but cannot be effectively in learning; (4) Levels 4 to 8, children are able to obtain information from the printed media. In other words, children start to read in order to learn but still have difficulty to understand the information from certain points of view of the story; (5) High school, the children become highly competent reader by developing the ability to understand the material from different points of view and can develop the ability to understand the material from different points of view.

There are 2 factors that affect the acquisition of language in children: biological and environmental factors. Biological factors include the systems and performance of the human brain which is programmed to learn language, which enable the children to detect images and rules of language, including phonological, syntactic, and semantic. Meanwhile, environmental factors include children's experiences, the type of language the children have learned, and the context in which learning takes place. Those factors have a powerful influence on language acquisition (Santrock, 2007). However, Lovit states that a number of factors that cause deficiencies in language acquisition. The factors including the deficits of cognitive, memory, the ability to evaluate, the ability to produce language, and the deficits in the field of pragmatic or the use of functional language (Abdurrahman, 2012).

In real life, not every child experienced a normal language development. Children with dyslexia will face difficulties in acquainting languages compared to normal children in general. In 1878, a German physician named Rudolf Berlin developed the term of dyslexia to describe the big hardship in interpreting written or printed symbols (Courtad and Bakken, 2015: 62). Dyslexic children according to Curtin, Manis,

and Siedenberg are specific functional failures to read properly that is happened at children who supposedly develop normally (Ravid and Schiff, 2012: 195). Compared to children of their age, dyslexic children are lacking of vocabulary, stammering while reading, experiencing a continuing problem to describe something, they do not understand what they are reading, having difficulties in reading comprehension caused by the problem of understanding the word order, they are always flipping the words, their reading ability does not match their visible intelligence and vocabulary, they often substitute visually similar words (for instance "this" for "that"), their reading level is low, unorganized words while reading, they continue to rely on pointing fingers while reading (for older students), their lips keep moving while reading (for older students) (Desiningrum, 2016:10).

One of the factors that inhibit someone's reading ability to be functioned normally according to Høien and Lundberg is phonological. A person with dyslexia usually indicates difficulty in performing phonological decoding (Ravid and Schiff, 2012: 195). In line with Høien and Lundberg, the International Dyslexia Association (Soriano and Miranda, 2015: 96) defines dyslexia as a specific learning disability derived from neurological. This is characterized by the difficulty of recognizing an accurate word and poor spelling and decoding ability. This difficulty is usually caused by an unexpected deficiency in the phonological language component that can be associated with the other cognitive abilities and an effective classroom instruction.

A self-concept has something to do with the language development. Based on preliminary field studies, dyslexic children have a negative self-concept caused by their low language acquisition. This is in the line with the research which is undertaken by Du (2012) titled *A Study of the Relationship between English Self-concept and Language Learning Strategies*. It is stated that there is a high correlation between self-concept and expression language. Péter-Szarka (2012) on his research titled *Changes in and the Relationship between Language Learning Motivation and Self-concept in 11-14 year-old Students in Hungary: A Longitudinal Study*, further states that there is a strong correlation between self-concept and language learning motivation. Based on the stated problems, this research is undertaken to describe self-concept

and language development in dyslexic children between the ages of 6 and 12

2. Research Method

This research applies descriptivequalitative method. Descriptive research aims to describe existing phenomena in the form of activities, characteristics, changes, relationships, similarities, and differences with other phenomena (Sukmadinata, 2012). This research is intended to find out the use of self-concept for the language development of 6 to 12 years old dyslexic students of Surakarta X Elementary Shcool. The subjects of this researchare 2 dyslexic students aged 7 and 9 years old. The data of this research were collected usingTennessee-scale instrument to determine the use of self-concept for 90 items. After being tested, the researcher obtained a score of 0,7540. Based on the result, 43 valid items were found. According to the measurement, a self-concept is categorized as negative when the result shows a negative score in the range of 43 – 107,5. Meanwhile, a self-concept is categorized as positive when the result shows the score in the range of107,6 – 172. However, in order to find out the language development of the dyslexic students, the researcher used the observation proposed by Gilbert R. Guerin and Arlee S. Maier (1983). The measurements are divided to 3 criterias: below average for the score between 0 – 22, average for the scorebetween23 – 45, and above average for the score above 45. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive technique.

3. Result

3.1 Self-concept of dyslexic children

The subject named “SK” obtained the score of 99 that can be indicated as negative self-concept. SK stated that he has a healthy body, he does not want to look neat and attractive, he feels unattractive, dislike how he is at the moment, he wants to change some parts of his body, he feels sick, he considers himself asimpolite, rude, not a bad person, he does not always lie, loved by his family, he feels that he is important to his family and his friends, he feels that he comes from a happy family, he feelshis family does not love him, he has quarrelsome with his family, he feels that his family does not trust him, cheerful, not a

smart person, he can easily make friends, he feels not being hated, he feels that he is important, he is easily to give up, he is a friendly person, he cannot so easliy to have friends, he tries to be liked by everyone, he is interested in what other people do, he easily to forgive others, and find it difficult to be friends with others.

Meanwhile, the subject named “YD” obtained the score of 102 that can be indicated as negative self-concept. YD stated that he has a healthy body, stated that he has a healthy body, he wants to look neat and attractive, he feels unattractive, dislike how he is at the moment, he wants to change some parts of his body, he feelshealthy, he considers himself asa polite person, he is a good person, he does not always lie, unloved by his family, he feels that he is important to his family and his friends, he feels that he comes from a happy family, he feelsthat his family does not love him, sometimes he has quarrelsome with his family, he feels that his family does not trust him, he feels that he is not cheerful, not a smart person, he can easily make friends, he feels not being hated, he feels that he is important, he is easily to give up, he is a friendly person, he cannot so easliy to have friends, he tries to be liked by everyone, he is interested in what other people do, he easily to forgive others, and find it difficult to be friends with others.

3.2 Language development of dyslexic children

The observation instrument of language development obtained by SK was 7. It can be concluded that SK’s language development tends to be low. In general, from the phonological, morphological, and syntactic aspects, SK’s language development is below average comapred to the children of his age. From the syntactic aspect, subjects shows the results that tends to be below average. Further, from the pragmatic aspect, SK also shows the results that tends to be below average.

Meanwhile, YD obtained the score of 8. It can be concluded that YD’s language development tends to be low. In general, from the phonological, morphological, and syntactic aspects, SK’s language development is below average comapred to the children of his age. From the syntactic aspect, subjects shows the results that tends to be below average. Further, from the pragmatic aspect, SK also shows the results that tends to be below average.

4. Discussion

Based on the stated result of self-concept and language development measurement, it can be seen that there is a connection between the two subjects. The self-concept measurement obtained by the two subjects indicates negative results. It is potentially because the language development of both subjects tends to be low. Self-concept will affects in the development of the language. Language can make the children understand about themselves (Rochat, 2010). The same concept is also in line by Du (2012) which states that there is a high correlation between self-concept and expression language. Further, Péter-Szarka (2012) adds that there is a huge correlation between self-concept and language learning motivation. Gurney, Elbaum and Vaughn, on the other hand states that children with learning disabilities (dyslexia) tend to have a lower level of self-concept than those who have no difficulty (Humphrey, 2014). Furthermore, McArthur, Castles, Kohnen and Banales (2016) on their research state that the difficulties in reading, language, and attention have a higher risk for academic self-concept and low general self-concept. Children with reading difficulty (dyslexia) have a high risk of low self-concept, especially the concept of self-academic. Generally, their academic achievement is lower. This phenomenon is a source of low personal perception as well (Eaude, on Humphrey, 2014). McArthur, Castles, Kohnen and Banales (2016) also state that dyslexic children with poor spoken language have low general self-concept. Cooley and Ayres, further state that children's self-concept with learning difficulties shows that academic failure (reading, writing, and numeracy) can affect general self-concept (Gans, Kenny, dan Ghany, 2003). Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that self-concept of dyslexic children tends to be lower due to low academic achievement as well.

5. Conclusion

The results of the research shows that the subject named "SK" obtained a negative self-concept with the total score of 99 and his language development tends to be below average with the total score of 7. Meanwhile, the subject named "YD" also obtained a negative self-concept with the total score of 102 and his language

development tends to be below average with the total score of 8. Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that a negative self-concept is related to the poor language development of dyslexic children. Dyslexic children experience the difficulty in doing phonological decoding. These language development difficulties result lead to the low result of self-perception to be able to recognize their signs and their own labels.

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