

An Investigation of the Effects of Dialogic Reading Program Applied in Children's Homes on Children's Language Development

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of dialogic reading education given to care staff working in children's homes on the language development of children in need of protection and the views of care staff on dialogic reading. The study was designed using the explanatory sequential mixed method in which quantitative and qualitative research methods were used together. The study group consisted of 9 children aged 5-8 years living in children's homes and 6 care staff responsible for their care. Girls and boys live in separate homes, and the average age of the children is 6 years and 7 months. One of the participating care staff members is male, and the remaining five are female. The ages of the participating staff range between 35 and 40. First, dialogic reading training was given to a total of six care staff members working in two different care homes. The training was completed in two sessions. After the training, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was administered to the children in the children's homes as a pre-test. The care staff who completed the training were asked to read books to the children for four weeks using the dialogic reading technique. After the application, the same test was administered as a post-test. Following the quantitative data collection, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with the care staff. As a result of the study, a significant difference was found between the pre-test and post-tests of the children who received dialogic reading. In addition, the participant staff stated that dialogic reading increased children's interest in book, developed various skills in children, and contributed to their professional development. This study recommends that care staff in children's homes receive training on dialogic reading and that this method be integrated into daily practice. Additionally, future studies with larger sample sizes and control groups should be conducted, and early interventions for language development in early childhood should be prioritized.



Çocuk Evinde Uygulanan Diyaloğa Dayalı Okuma Programının Çocukların Dil Gelişimine Etkilerinin İncelenmesi

Makale Bilgisi

ÖZET

Geliş Tarihi: 29.04.2024
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Bu çalışmanın amacı çocuk evlerinde çalışan bakım personellerine verilen diyaloğa dayalı kitap okuma eğitiminin, korunmaya muhtaç çocukların dil gelişimine etkisini ve bakım personellerinin diyaloğa dayalı okuma hakkındaki görüşlerini araştırmaktır. Çalışma, nicel ve nitel araştırma yöntemlerinin bir arada kullanıldığı açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntemi kullanarak tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, çocuk evlerinde yaşayan 5-8 yaşlarında 9 çocuk ve onların bakımlarından sorumlu 6 bakım personelinden oluşmaktadır. Kız çocuklar ve erkek çocuklar ayrı evlerde kalmaktadır ve çocukların yaş ortalaması 6 yıl 7 aydır. Katılımcı bakım personelinin biri erkek, kalan beşi kadındır. Katılımcı personelin yaşları 35 ile 40 arasında değişmektedir. İlk olarak iki farklı bakım evinde görevli toplam 6 bakım personeline diyaloğa dayalı okuma eğitimi verilmiştir. Eğitim iki oturumda tamamlanmıştır. Eğitimin ardından çocuk evinde yer alan çocuklara Peabody Resim Kelime Testi ön test olarak uygulanmıştır. Eğitimi tamamlayan bakım personellerinden diyaloğa dayalı okuma tekniği ile çocuklara dört hafta boyunca kitap okumaları istenmiştir. Uygulamanın ardından aynı test son test olarak uygulanmıştır. Nicel verilerin ardından nitel veriler yarı bakım personelleri ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ile toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda diyaloğa dayalı okuma gerçekleştirilen çocukların ön test ve son testleri arasında anlamlı bir fark elde edilmiştir. Ayrıca katılımcı personeller diyaloğa dayalı okumanın çocukların kitap sevgisini artırdığını, çocuklarda çeşitli becerileri geliştirdiğini, mesleki gelişimlerine katkı sağladığını belirtmişlerdir. Bu çalışma, çocuk evlerinde çalışan personelin diyalojik okuma konusunda eğitim almasını ve bu yöntemin günlük uygulamalara entegre edilmesini önermektedir. Ayrıca, gelecekte daha geniş örneklemler ve kontrol gruplu çalışmalar yapılmalı ve erken çocukluk döneminde dil gelişimine yönelik erken müdahalelere öncelik verilmelidir.

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INTRODUCTION

The early childhood period is of critical importance in the acquisition of language skills (Ari, 2005). Reading books to children is among the most recommended activities to support language skills in early childhood (Berk, 2013). Research has demonstrated that children who are regularly read in the preschool period exhibit more advanced language skills than their peers (Karrass & Braungart-Rieker, 2005). In order to optimally support children's language development, it is not only essential to read books but also the methods employed to engage children with books. Co-reading, which is defined as an adult reading a story without interruption, and interactive reading, which is defined as an adult reading a story text while asking questions and making explanations, are two forms of interactive reading (Trivette & Dunst, 2007).

Language skills play a critical role in an individual's communication skills, cognitive development, and academic success (Berk, 2013). In the acquisition of these skills, the early childhood period is recognized as a critical period by many researchers and educators (Ari, 2005). Early childhood is a time period in which the foundations of individuals' language development are laid and these skills form the basis of complex communication and learning processes in the future. Therefore, supporting language skills in early childhood can help children better cope with the intellectual and social challenges they will face throughout their lives.

Among the methods used to develop language skills in early childhood, the activity of reading books to children is particularly important (Berk, 2013). Regular reading to children increases their vocabulary, improves their sentence structure, develops their analytical thinking skills, and helps them develop the habit of reading. Furthermore, research indicates that children who are reading on a regular basis during their preschool years exhibit superior language skills compared to their peers (Karrass & Braungart-Rieker, 2005). Therefore, reading books activity is considered an indispensable tool in encouraging language development in early childhood.

However, it is emphasized that reading books to support language development in children is not limited to a passive reading experience but also that it should be transformed into a more in-depth experience. An effective reading experience requires adults to interact with children. This interaction contributes to the understanding and internalization of the story. It is important that adults not only read the text of the story but also ask questions about the story, talk about the topic, and encourage children to think. In this manner, children are not merely passive listeners but also become integral to the narrative, thereby facilitating more profound language development (Whitehurst et al., 1988). The objective of interactive reading is to encourage the adult to read the story text by asking questions and making explanations, thus encouraging the children to understand the story more deeply (Trivette & Dunst, 2007). This approach supports language development by enabling the children to reflect on the reading material and express themselves. A further advance in this field was the development of the 'dialogic reading' approach by Whitehurst and colleagues (1988), which places children in a position of creating the story (Trivette & Dunst, 2007). In this approach, children contribute to the narrative by providing input to the adult, thereby influencing the direction of the story. This approach encourages children to engage in active participation, which in turn facilitates the development of their language skills (Tetik, & Işıkoğlu Erdoğan, 2016).

A variety of methods are employed to facilitate language development. One such method is dialogic reading. Dialogic reading is an interactive reading approach that assists children in comprehending and interpreting texts within books. Dialogic Reading adopt an approach that emphasizes the interaction between parents or caregivers and their children, with the objective of supporting children's language development. In particular, these trainings encourage active participation in the processes of reading stories, engaging in conversations, asking questions, and

understanding the text. The hallmark of this training is to enable children to interact with the text rather than merely passively listening. In this method, parents or caregivers assist children in developing their speech and language skills by using questions, comments and prompts while reading books to them. This method helps children to increase their vocabulary, comprehension skills, expressive language and knowledge of the text.

Early childhood education begins in the family. However, in some cases, there are 'children in need of protection'. This is a child whose basic care and upbringing are hindered by obstacles that impede their development into mentally, physically, and socially healthy adults (Elmacı, 2010). 'Children in need of protection' are children who require special protection from the state (Tomanbay, 1999). In children's homes where children in need of protection reside, the objective is to facilitate their growth into socially beneficial individuals through the provision of comprehensive physical and psycho-social development (Nalbant, 2016). Children are placed in children's homes based on their gender developmental status and with a maximum age difference of three years, except in cases of siblings (Başer, 2013). The personnel of children's homes are trained in child care and work in shifts. The personnel responsible for the care of children remain with the children for 24 hours a day, attempting to provide one-on-one care by addressing all aspects of the home. Care staff monitor the development of the children and contribute to their education. Home supervisors facilitate communication between the children's homes and the directorate. The Coordination Centre Directorate is responsible for conducting routine inspections and follow-ups of children's homes (Nalbant, 2016). The Children's Homes Model is a service model implemented by the Department of Care Services, the General Directorate of Child Services, and the Directorate General of Child Services. Personnel responsible for the care of 'children in need of protection' occupy a pivotal position in the healthy development of children. Inadequate and untrained personnel tasked with the care of children in need of protection and insufficient one-to-one attention have a detrimental impact on their development. Şahin (2018) demonstrated in his study that care staff working in children's homes play a significant role in the transfer of values to children.

Children's homes are institutions where children are placed under the protection of the state in cases where they are deprived of a family environment or are abused in a family environment. The language development of children in children's homes may be slower and more backward than children growing up in a family environment. Therefore, implementing a dialogic reading activity for children in children's homes can be an important step to support their language development and increase their school success. The development of language is a fundamental communication skill that individuals will utilize throughout their lives and it is a critical factor affecting their individual and social success. That is why research on language development, pedagogical approaches, and educational practices has been an important focus for both parents and educators.

The aim of this research is to examine the effect of dialogic reading training given to care staff working in children's homes on the language development of children in children's homes. In line with this purpose, the results and findings observed in the study may provide important clues for parents, educators and language development specialists. With this aim in mind, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there a significant difference in the language development scores of children before and after dialogic reading?
2. What are the opinions of the care staff in children's homes about dialogic reading?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method research design, chosen for its focus on a primarily quantitative procedure that is followed by a qualitative procedure to explain or build upon the initial quantitative results (Creswell, 2013). This approach is beneficial as it allows for the integration of both numerical and textual data, thereby enhancing the quality of the research outcomes. It is a superior methodology to the use of a single research method, as it facilitates a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The most significant distinguishing feature of the mixed method is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods leads to more reliable results. The fundamental objective of this approach is to conduct in-depth research by integrating quantitative and qualitative data on the researcher's problem (Creswell, 2012). The present study examined the effects of dialogic reading from a comprehensive perspective, employing both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

In the quantitative dimension of the research, conducted in accordance with the mixed method research design, a quasi-experimental design without a control group was employed. The single-subject quasi-experimental design, as defined by Büyüköztürk (2007), is a detailed investigation of an individual or a group. In this research, which did not include a control group, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was administered to the children as a pretest prior to the intervention and again as a posttest following its completion. In the qualitative phase of the study, the case study model was employed. A case study is a research method employed by the researcher to examine a specific event, situation or phenomenon in depth (Creswell, 2009). This method is designed to understand the inner context, complexity and richness of the event. In the present study, the views of care staff working in children's homes on dialogic reading were examined through in-depth interviews.

Participants

Two study groups were formed in the research. The study participants were determined using the convenience sampling method (Creswell, 2012). In the quantitative dimension of the research, nine children between the ages of 5 and 8 were observed in two children's homes for children in need of protection in a specific Western Anatolian city. Girls and boys were placed in different homes. The gender distribution was three girls and six boys. The children's average age was 6 years and 7 months. In the qualitative dimension of the research, six care staff were interviewed. One of the participating care staff was male, while the remaining five were female. Four of the care staff were university graduates, and two were graduates of the faculty of education. Two care staff graduated from the child development department of vocational high schools. The participating staff's ages ranged from 35 to 40 years old. All participating staff were permanent employees, with the least experienced individual having been employed at the institution for three and a half years and the most experienced having been employed for thirteen years. Prior to conducting the study, the necessary permissions were obtained from the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Additionally, the children and staff in charge at the children's homes were informed about the research and asked whether they were willing to participate. All children and staff indicated their willingness to participate.

Research Instruments

In this mixed research design study, data were collected through quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. Quantitative data were obtained using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test to determine children's language skills. A semi-structured interview form was used as a qualitative data collection tool.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

The Peabody Picture-Word Test is a standardized test designed to assess children's receptive language skills (Hoffman, Templin, & Rice 2012). The Peabody Picture-Word Test was initially developed by Lyod M. Dunn & Lecto M. Dunn in 1959 and subsequently revised in 1997 (Wakefield, 2005). The test was adapted into Turkish by Katz, et al., (1974) and has been demonstrated to be both valid and reliable. The Peabody Picture-Word Test can be applied to all individuals from 2.5 years to 90 years of age (Wakefield, 2004). The test is administered individually in approximately 10-15 minutes. The test consists of 100 cards with four black and white pictures on each page. The researcher requests that the test taker select the most appropriate image for the word in question. The test is terminated if six of the last eight words are answered incorrectly. The total number of correct answers constitutes the raw score of the test. The raw score is converted to the child's receptive language age using the receptive language score table. The child's chronological age is calculated by subtracting the date of birth from the date the test was administered. At the conclusion of the examination, the child's raw score is converted into a receptive language score. No additional training is required for the administration of the test (Kurnaz, 2006).

Semi-structured Interview Form

The questions to be posed to the participants in the semi-structured interview were created by taking expert opinions after the post-tests were administered. These questions were then reshaped by presenting them to three different field experts. The semi-structured interview form included questions about the participants' opinions of the research, their reasons for volunteering in this research, the effect of the books read with this method on children, their reading experiences, and whether they would continue to read books to children and why.

Book Selection

The picture books used in this study were selected based on criteria defined in similar studies for high-quality early childhood literature, which include a simple plot, developmentally appropriate vocabulary, stories with familiar and interesting situations for young children, a limited number of main characters, and culturally diverse characters (Edwards, 2010). Additionally, when selecting dialogic reading books, we looked for books with clear and varied illustrations but minimal text. Pictures are used to introduce new words and facilitate children's expressive language (Flynn, 2011). The researcher selected books that met these criteria.

Processes

Once the requisite permissions had been obtained from the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the researcher proceeded to provide dialogic reading methods for the education of the care staff participating in the research. The education was completed in two sessions. In the first session, dialogic reading involves four specific strategies or sequences known as "PEER," which signify the interaction or dialogues between adults and children in the dialogic reading activity. "PEER" strategies consist of "Prompting, Evaluating, Expanding, Recalling" (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). Accompanying the PEER strategies, some prompting techniques called 'CROWD' have been established. CROWD includes "Completion Prompt," "Recall Prompt," "Open-ended Prompt," "Wh-Prompt," and "Distancing Prompt" (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). In addition, the attendees were furnished with a written information note containing the points they were expected to pay attention to. In the second session, the researcher developed sample activities using the dialogic reading method in two distinct care settings, which were then observed and practiced by the participating care staff. Prior to the commencement of the intervention, the children involved in the study were administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test as a pre-test.

After the application of the pre-tests, the care staff participating in the study were asked to read the selected books to the children every day for 4 weeks using the dialogic reading method. The care staff who read the books recorded the names, reading times, and frequency of the books they read to the children. After the application, post-tests were administered to the children participating in the study. Following the collection of quantitative data, qualitative data were gathered through one-on-one interviews with the participating care staff. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes per staff member and was conducted face-to-face, with audio recordings taken.

Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data from the study were analyzed independently, and the results were compared. In the quantitative data analysis, the total language scores of the participants' children from the Peabody Picture-Word Test were calculated. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied to determine the presence of a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. The SPSS software package was used to analyze the quantitative data. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test allows for the determination of the direction of score differences between two related measures (Büyüköztürk, 2007).

FINDINGS

Findings on Quantitative Data

In this one-group quasi-experimental design study, children's scores from the pre-test and post-test were first calculated. To determine the effect of the 4-week dialogic reading activities on children's language development, the scores from the Peabody Picture-Word Test were compared using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Pre-test -Post test	N	Mean of rank	Sum of rank	Z	P
Speabody - Peabody	1	2.50	2.50	-2.376	.018
Negative rank	8	5.31	42.50		
Positive rank	9				
Ties					

$P = .000 < 0.05$

When Table 1 is analyzed, a significant difference ($P = .018$) was found between children's baseline and post-test scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. When the rank sums of the score differences were examined, it was seen that the difference was positive, indicating an improvement in the post-test scores. According to these results, it is evident that the dialogic reading activity has a positive effect on children's language development. The data obtained from the reading records of the care staff in two different children's homes during the dialogic reading activities were analyzed and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Information About Dialogic Reading

Variables	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean
Time (min)	15	39	560	20
Number of participating children	9	9	9	9

As seen in Table 2, the duration of the dialogic reading activity was 20 minutes on average; the minimum duration was 15 minutes and the maximum duration was 39 minutes. In this group, a total of 560 minutes of dialogic book reading activity was carried out considering the whole of the applications.

Findings on Qualitative Data

The content analysis of the qualitative data obtained in order to reveal the views and experiences of the participant care staff about the dialogic reading activity they implemented yielded three main themes. These were analyzed under the following themes: (1) love of reading, (2) skill development and learning, and (3) dialogic reading process.

1) Love of Reading

Participant care staff stated that the dialogic reading activity increased children's interest and awareness in books, ultimately fostering a love for books. For example, Participant 1 said, "They started to love books as they read," while Participant 4 mentioned, "They began to enjoy reading books more with this method," indicating that children developed a greater affinity for books after starting the dialogic reading activity. Additionally, Participant 2, who noted changes in children's reading behaviors, used the following sentences.

"They started to like reading books more. Our child who can read, for example, started to read books without being told to read a book. Mehmet started to read books. Mehmet: He used to ask İrfan if he could read to me because he could not read books himself. There were many differences in the children after they started reading books. When they were reading books, they used to take the floor, they used to raise their fingers, now it has become a habit when they say something, they say, Can I say something?"

In the participant statements above, it was seen that children's interest in reading increased/woke up with the implementation of this program. The fact that children read books to each other outside the reading activity reveals that their interest continues. Participant 3 stated that the love and interest in reading increased in children in the following statements.

"Before, some of our children did not participate much. One of our children has mild learning difficulties. At first, he did not participate much. As he read the books, he started to participate spontaneously. I think it is a much more positive development for him."

In the children's homes, children from different developmental levels participated in dialogic reading activities together. The participation of a child with learning difficulties in reading activities towards the end, despite her lack of active participation earlier, demonstrates the effectiveness of this type of reading.

2) Skill Development and Learning

Interviews with participant care staff revealed that the dialogic reading activity supported the development of various skills in children. Participants reported that due to the dialogic reading activity, children's attention increased, as expressed by one participant: "They listened more carefully than in the first days." Additionally, participants noted improvements in children's vocabulary, stating, "I think the children's vocabulary improved." Participants also observed that children's imagination developed, they empathized more, and their perspectives changed. For instance, Participant 1 mentioned that "Children's perspectives changed. They began making different interpretations using their imagination and tried to put themselves in the shoes of the characters in the book and understand their feelings and behavior." Participants stated that children learn many behaviors and rules from the messages in the books. For example, Participant

1:

“Of course, there were social messages in the content of the stories. There were issues such as honesty and reliability. I felt the need to explain these to the children again. I think it was also beneficial for them to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong. There were concepts such as friendship and solidarity in the books. We went over them once again; we touched on the ones we did not mention.”

The above statements revealed that children learnt about various social issues in the dialogic reading activity.

3) Dialogic Reading Process

The participant care staff were introduced to a novel reading method and reported gaining new insights and experiences in this context. They described these experiences as highly beneficial for both themselves and the children. For instance, Participant 4 stated that the reading activity benefited both the children and themselves, as both parties showed improvement. Furthermore, the participants noted an increase in children's participation in the activity over time. One participant observed that initially, some children were less interested in books. However, as the reading sessions continued, they started to engage more by interpreting the content through accompanying images. She noted that the children's interest grew as a result of these reading activities. Additionally, participants mentioned encountering initial challenges with the method. However, they were able to identify and address these issues over time. The following participant statements illustrate this.

“When he first read, our child with learning difficulties did not want to listen. There was a lot of shouting, he was in his own way, but then he started to like it as he continued reading.”

“The children did not talk so much at the beginning. As we read the books, they started to talk more. At first, we didn't know at first and neither did the children. What I perceived when it was said that a story was read was more like you read and the children listened. But later, by talking to the children and letting them talk... They wanted to participate more, they wanted to talk more, they started to comment more.”

The aforementioned statements demonstrate that interest in dialogic reading activities and children's participation increased as the readings progressed, and that the child with learning difficulties exhibited greater development. Concurrently, interview data revealed that dialogic reading also had positive effects on the staff. Participants described these effects as gaining insights into children, fostering positive communication with them, and contributing to their professional development. For instance, Participant 3 made the following statements.

“As I read the books during the activity, for example, I saw that the children's favorite stories were stories with animals, I did not know that they loved animals so much. For example, he imitated animals very well, I did not know this feature, he was more like an introvert. We know the children, we spend time with them all the time, but they also have characteristics we do not know.”

The participants indicated that they derived enjoyment from the reading activity and that they would utilize dialogic reading in their future professional lives. They also perceived that the reading activity had a beneficial effect on them. The participants stated that they had gained insights from the stories and that they had improved in this sense. For example, participant 2 used the following expressions.

“It was a good practice for me, it was very nice to see the development of the children. I

saw the necessity of reading books once again. It was a nice experience for me. It was useful... I think I will continue to read books in this way from now on. Of course, it is a little difficult to be every day, even if it is not so intense, I will continue to practice."

DISCUSSION

The study, which examined the effect of dialogic reading on the language development of children aged 5-8 years living in children's homes, revealed three key findings. Firstly, the dialogic reading seminar provided to care staff working in children's homes enabled them to gain knowledge and skills about dialogic reading methods and to apply this reading method during their tasks. The seminar, which was part of the research project, ensured that care staff read dialogue-based books to children on a regular and systematic basis. This, in turn, supported the language development of the children. In a qualitative study conducted by Kaya Kılıç & Tekin (2019), social workers working in children's protection units were interviewed to gain insight into their thoughts and opinions on the services provided in cases of neglect and abuse of children. The research revealed that among the difficulties observed in children in need of protection services, there is both quantitative and qualitative staff shortage, and there is also a lack of in-service training. Furthermore, it was determined that parents of children in need of protection exhibited an overly reactive, discourteous, and rejecting attitude during the evaluation process. Consequently, it was recommended that the number of personnel be increased and in-service training be provided. In services provided to children in need of protection, there are problems such as workload, resource constraints, and lack of personnel, as well as employment of individuals who do not have professional competence (McGregor, 2009; Tuncer & Erdoğan, 2018). Based on the results of this research, it can be suggested that care staff working in children's homes should be given necessary training seminars and encouraged to read during their duties.

The quantitative findings of the study indicated that implementing a dialogic reading program over a four-week period by staff working in children's homes, where dialogue-based reading training had been provided, enhanced the language development levels of children. Analysis of data obtained from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test revealed a discernible difference between pre-test and post-test scores, demonstrating the positive impact of utilizing a dialogic reading method on children's language development. In terms of developing reading skills, the manner in which books are read is more important than the number of books read (Trivette & Dunst, 2007).

Dialogic reading, which involves providing children with the opportunity to speak, ask questions, and repeat learned words, aligns with studies demonstrating its efficacy in supporting children's language skills (Yılmaz & Turgüner, 2022; Tetik & Işıkoğlu Erdoğan, Şimşek, & Canbeldek 2017; Gonzalez et al.; LeRoux, 2013). This research is consistent with previous findings that highlight the efficacy of dialogic reading, particularly for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Suryati et al., 2017). In another study by Işıkoğlu Erdoğan et al. (2017), the effect of a 6-week dialogic reading intervention program on children's language development was examined. Mothers attended seminars where the dialogic reading method was taught, and they read books to children using this method for six weeks, three days a week. Significant differences were found between initial and final tests in children's receptive expressive and total language scores as a result of the intervention. The quantitative findings of this study support other research on dialogic reading. Based on these results, it may be recommended to conduct experimental research with at-risk children.

The findings of the interviews with the participants indicated that dialogic reading fostered a love of reading in children residing in children's homes, facilitated the development of various skills and learning, and improved their reading process. Işıkoğlu Erdoğan et al. (2017) observed in their

study that in the dialogic reading process of mothers, children began to focus more comfortably and for a longer duration, and their vocabulary improved. In a similar vein, Pillinger & Wood (2014) conducted a qualitative study with four-year-old children and their parents.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of dialogic reading on the language development of children aged 5-8 years living in children's homes, revealing significant findings that highlight the potential of this approach in fostering language skills. The training provided to care staff on dialogic reading methods not only equipped them with essential skills but also allowed them to apply these techniques systematically, resulting in measurable improvements in the children's language development. Quantitative results from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test demonstrated clear progress in the children's vocabulary, confirming the positive impact of dialogic reading. Furthermore, qualitative data indicated that dialogic reading fostered a love for reading, improved children's ability to focus, and enhanced their vocabulary, supporting previous research on the benefits of this reading method for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The research underscores the importance of training care staff to employ dialogic reading techniques, which in turn enhances the educational environment for children in institutional care. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that children's development is influenced by multiple factors beyond reading activities, and thus, while dialogic reading can significantly contribute to language development, it should be complemented by a broader range of support services. The lack of a control group limits the generalizability of the findings, but the results offer strong evidence for the benefits of dialogic reading in similar settings.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Expand In-Service Training Programs: Care staff working in children's homes should receive ongoing in-service training on dialogic reading and other educational methods. These training sessions should be comprehensive and include follow-up assessments to ensure that care staff are applying the skills effectively.

Encourage Systematic Implementation of Dialogic Reading: Institutions should integrate dialogic reading into the daily routines of children's homes to maximize its potential for supporting language development. This can be achieved through the establishment of structured reading schedules and the provision of appropriate materials.

Conduct Further Research: Future studies should explore the effects of dialogic reading with larger sample sizes and include control groups to enhance the validity and generalizability of the findings. Moreover, research on the long-term effects of dialogic reading on children's language development, including their academic performance, would provide valuable insights.

Focus on Early Childhood Education: For children not yet in compulsory education, promoting participation in structured educational activities can help to mitigate the developmental gaps often seen in children living in care. Early interventions, including language and literacy programs, should be prioritized.

Ethical Statement

This study is not based on a master's/doctoral thesis and has not been presented as a poster or orally at a symposium.

Ethics Committee Approval

Since the data for this study were obtained before 2020, ethical committee approval was not required.

Author Contributions

Research Design (CRediT 1) Author 1 (%100)

Data Collection (CRediT 2) Author 1 (%100)

Research - Data analysis - Validation (CRediT 3-4-6-11) Author 1 (%100)

Writing the Article (CRediT 12-13) Author 1 (%100)

Revision and Improvement of the Text (CRediT 14) Author 1 (%100)

Finance

This study was not supported by any institution.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

This study aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Sustainable Development Goals: 1: No Poverty: Education is a crucial tool in breaking the cycle of poverty. Reading education programs can help children in children's homes gain better educational and employment opportunities in the future.

Sustainable Development Goals: 4 Quality Education: The specific target addressed is 4.6 "By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy." The implementation of reading education programs for children living in children's homes directly contributes to this target by enhancing literacy skills and fostering a lifelong love for reading. These programs aim to provide equitable access to quality education, thereby promoting inclusive learning environments. By improving literacy rates among vulnerable populations, the study supports the broader objective of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Sustainable Development Goals: 10: Reduced Inequalities - Programs targeting disadvantaged groups play a significant role in reducing social inequalities.

Sustainable Development Goals: 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions - Education helps children understand their rights and responsibilities, contributing to the development of more peaceful and just societies. By addressing these goals, the reading education program for children living in children's homes contributes to broader sustainable development objectives, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

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