REINFORCEMENT USED IN TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS

I Komang Dedik Susila

English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Pedagogy, Dwijendra University
dediksusila@gmail.com, dediksusila@undwi.ac.id

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis reinforcement yang digunakan untuk mengajar anak usia dini. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif pada study kasus. Subjek yang diteliti merupakan guru-guru di TK Aura Sukma Insani. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi merekam, dan bertanya jawab. Instrument yang digunakan adalah panduan wawancara, perekam video, kamera, lembar observasi, dan catatan. Hasilnya menunjukan bahwa guru-guru di TK Aura Sukma Insani mengimplentasikan reinforcement positif dan negative. Reinforcement positif yang paling umum digunakan sedangkan reinforcement negative jarang digunakan oleh guru-guru.

Kata kunci: reinforcement, reinforcement positif, reinforcement negatif

Abstract

This study aimed at analyzing reinforcement used in teaching young learners. The study was qualitative case study. The subjects of this study were the teachers of Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. The data were collected through observation, recording, and interview. Data of this study was collected by using several instruments, namely; interview guide, video recorder, camera, observation sheet, and field note. The finding shows that the teachers at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten implemented positive and negative reinforcements to manage students' behaviors. The most common reinforcement given was positive reinforcement such as giving praise, sticker, rolled paper, etc. The negative reinforcement was rarely implemented.

Keywords: reinforcement, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is a process of ensuring the classroom runs smoothly. It gives a way to prevent destructive behavior. According to Walufa, Malimbe, and Kafu (2011), classroom management aims to establish and encourage students' self-control through process of promoting positive achievement and behavior. Where students have high self-control, they will be able to differentiate which one is appropriate and which one is inappropriate behavior to be done. Self-control will avoid students from destructive behavior. As one of aspects in classroom management, motivation plays important role.

Motivation helps students to do task and engage in teaching learning process. According to Rehman and Haider (2013), motivation also improves classroom speed and creates positive atmosphere of classroom. Students who are characterized as motivated students feel inspiration to fill the task and engage teaching learning process and vice versa. The amount of motivation among students is various, some students might be highly motivated, some students might be averaged and the rest might be demotivated.

According to Abbas and Khurshid (2013), motivation is significant to arouse students' interest towards learning process in every teaching learning situation. When students are interested towards learning automatically they will be easily to learn. Motivation can be administered in any classroom situation both

young and adult learner. At primary level motivation plays important role as compared to the other levels of learning due to the fact that young learners need to be motivated towards learning as they experience the new knowledge.

Most of teachers agree that motivating student is challenging task in teaching. Students must be motivated in order to engage them physically and psychologically in teaching learning process. Due to teaching lesson plan, motivating students is initial task to deal with before entering whilst activities. Thus, teacher needs to give special attention to this aspect. It does not matter how well teacher explains the material and delivers the subject, it will not work if the students are demotivated.

One way to improve students' motivation is through giving reinforcement. According to Zirpoli (2008), reinforcement is any stimulus that maintains or increases the behavior which is exhibited immediately after presenting a stimulus. The stimulus is considered as reinforcement if the stimulus is followed by maintaining or increasing the behaviors.

Reinforcement may be positive or negative. Both positive and negative reinforcement increase behavior. Many people substitute the term positive and negative reinforcement into reward and punishment. Zirpoli (2008) stated that positive reinforcement is contingent provision of stimulus (e.g., a treat, an object, or an activity) following a target behavior, which result in an increase or a maintenance of the frequency, duration, and/or intensity of the target behavior. Meanwhile, negative reinforcement is the contingent removal of a stimulus following a target behavior, which results in an increase or a maintenance of the

frequency, duration, and/or intensity of the target behavior.

Reinforcement is a powerful tool in behavior management. According to Muslikah (2011), the implementation of positive reinforcements directly influences the students' behavior in classroom. She studied about the effect of positive reinforcement toward students' MAN Tengaran in 2011. Her study shows there is significant effect among positive reinforcement and students' behavior.

Walufa, Malimbe, and Kafu (2011) studied about positive reinforcement as aspect of classroom management. They investigated the reaction of students and teacher toward the use of positive reinforcement as a classroom management technique. This study found out students had better reaction rather than use other classroom management techniques such as involving parents or have a teacher talk. In other words, positive reinforcement was an effective technique to deal with behavior.

Jayanthi (2012) conducted a research about reinforcement used by male and female teacher at Sukma Helen Flavel Kindergarten in academic year 2011/ 2012. She investigated about types of reinforcement given by male and female teacher and their effect. The finding showed that there was no influence on gender in using reinforcement. After reinforced, students were actively involved in classroom.

Studies conducted on reinforcement attract the writer to conduct another research on reinforcement aspect. Although, reinforcement is essential aspect on classroom management and suggested to be implemented in any classroom situation, many teachers have no idea when and what is the best reinforcement given to students

on certain situation and condition especially on public school. Furthermore, the reinforcement given is monotone, for instead "good", "good job", so students might not feel reinforced by those reinforcements. The selection of school is important to gather the information about implementation of reinforcement.

Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten is appropriate school to collect data about implementation of reinforcement. The first consideration is teaching learning process which considering every aspect of students such as affective, cognitive, and psychomotor in conducting meaningful and interesting lesson. On pre-observation held by the writer, the reinforcements frequently used to increase and maintain students' motivation.

The aim of this study is to analyze the reinforcement used by teachers in Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. This study can provide valuable information on the variety of reinforcement used to teach young learners. Thus, the reinforcement given can strengthen the stimuli given.

2. METHOD

The design of this study was qualitative study in form of case study. The qualitative case study examines a phenomenon within its real-life context. Data were collected on or about a single individual, group, or event. The primary purpose of a case study is to understand something that is unique to the case. The study analyzed the variety of reinforcement used by teachers in teaching young learners.

The subjects of this study were the teachers of Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. Teachers of Aura Sukma Insani Kindergartenhad

been chosen because through pre-observation the teachers often delivered many reinforcements to their students. That was the strong reason of choosing the subject in order to find out the necessary data.

This study was conducted at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. After pre-observation, this school was selected by considering several reasons. Firstly, this school is bilingual school which is using English as classroom language. Secondly, teaching learning process in this school considers every aspect of students such as affective, cognitive, and psychomotor in conducting meaningful and interesting activity. Thirdly, teachers in this school are competence and skillful in teaching, they are frequently administrated reinforcements. These considerations made the researcher believe to collect necessary data.

Data of this study was collected by using several instruments, namely; interview guide, video recorder, camera, observation sheet, and field note. While the methods of data collection were observation, recording, and interview. The collected data were ensured by data triangulation which involves time triangulation, space triangulation, person triangulation, and methodological triangulation.

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman (1994) theory of data analysis. There are three steps in analyzing the data namely: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was analyzing reinforcement given by the teachers. The research found there were two types of

reinforcement used; there were positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is the presentation of a desirable consequence after a behavior has been exhibited. The consequences of behavior, tends to increase or sustain the frequency or duration with which the behavior is exhibited in the future. Meanwhile negative reinforcement is when a certain stimulus/item is removed after a particular behavior is exhibited.

Positive reinforcement was the most frequent reinforcement used by the teachers. It is the most effective reinforcement for behavior management in this school. According to Sadowski (2011), positive reinforcement is a very powerful and effective tool to help shape and change behavior. Positive reinforcement works by presenting a motivating item to the person after the desired behavior is exhibited, making the behavior more likely to happen in the future.

There were various ways of delivering positive reinforcements. They can be very simple act such as giving praise. The learners were appreciated for the good behavior they did by language expression and body language. The use of language expression such as "good job", "excellent", "well done", "amazing" frequently used by the teachers. The teacher also used body language to prize the learners such as "thumbs up" and "tapping on shoulder". Another way was giving stickers. Sticker is appropriate reward for young students. The teachers appreciate students' performance by giving a sticker. Students sing loudly when singing time or students answer question correctly for instance. The students will be rewarded a sticker. Teacher gives a sticker to a student for answering the question correctly. The stickers are various shapes and colors which are attractive for students. Student is really excited when he gets a sticker. The sticker seems to be precious for students since it is quite difficult to get a sticker. Students collect the sticker and put it on the sticker wall.

Besides giving a sticker, teacher also can give a stamp to reward students' performance. The function of stamp and sticker is identical to encourage students in the activities and reinforce students to develop character education. Teacher gives students a stamp for good performance.

The teacher gave a stamp to student for singing loudly. The shape of stamp can be a star or sun which means something shines. Students were happy when they got stamp because they can show to their parents. The aim of this reward is to show parents about the progress of their children in school.

Rolled paper can be as a reward for students who perform good behaviors. The teacher gives students rolled paper to hang it under their names. Teacher hangs the names of student on the window inside of classroom. The longest rolled paper means that the students frequently perform good behaviors. The teacher gives the reward not only for performing well in the classroom but also outside of classroom. Environmental and social care such as putting the rubbish on the rubbish can, making friend with all, communicating well, and helping each other are the behaviors which deserves for this reward. The rolled papers are in various colors which are interesting for students.

Based on the teacher, there are three reasons teachers hang the rolled paper on the window. Firstly, it motivates students in teaching

learning process or behaving since they are easily to see those rewards. Secondly, it can be decoration in classroom which makes classroom cheerful and comfortable. Thirdly, it shows students' development; the teachers know which students perform good behaviors and which students are active or passive one.

The students who collect the most rolled papers are awarded extra time to play in the school yard. This also uses as guidance for differentiated instruction, students who get the most rolled paper will challenge to the higher level of materials rather than others. The rolled papers of students will be calculated every month and then the students who have the most will be awarded the extra time. Others acts can be giving privilege, token, attention, good grade, an honor, an award, food, and positive feedback

On the other hand, the teachers also implemented negative reinforcements. It is removal of a stimulus following a target behavior, which results in an increase or a maintenance of the frequency, duration, and intensity of the target behavior. There were some activities to implement negative reinforcements such as taking away a deadline of the assignment and task given. Taking away surveillance, a threat, a negative evaluation, bad grade, and criticism are the common activities done by the teacher to strengthen the students' behaviors.

Thus, the teachers at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten implemented positive and negative reinforcements. The most common reinforcement given was positive reinforcement such as giving praise, sticker, rolled paper, etc. The negative reinforcement was rarely implemented since the teachers tended to build positive atmosphere of classroom where students

were eagerness to acquire something by doing another thing.

4. CLOSING

The teachers at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten implemented positive and negative reinforcements to manage students' behaviors. The most common reinforcement given was positive reinforcement such as giving praise, sticker, rolled paper, etc. The negative reinforcement was rarely implemented since the teachers tended to build positive atmosphere of classroom where students were eagerness to acquire something by doing another thing. Since the use of reinforcement is developing by age, doing a research on reinforcement is always challenging. The further researchers can analyze the new activities of implementing reinforcement.

5. DAFTAR PUSTAKA

Abbas, Maimoona and Khurshid, Fauzia. 2013. "Motivational Techniques and Learners 'Academic Achievement at Primary Level." Global Journal of Human Social Science Linguistics & Education. Volume 13 Issue 3 Version 1.0 Year 2013. Available at https://globaljournals.org. (Access on February, 5th 2015).

Jayanthi, Ni Made Marlina Dwi. 2012. An Analysis of Reinforcement Used by Male and Female Teachers for Young Learners at Sukma Helen Flavel Kindergarten Singaraja in the Academic Year 2011/2014. Thesis (unpublished). Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha.

Miles, B. Matthew and Huberman, A. Michael. 1994. Qualitative Data Analysis. Second Edition. London: Sage Publication.

Muslikah, Rahayu. 2011. Pengaruh Implementasi Positive Reinforcement

dalam kelas terhadap tingkah laku siswa kelas XI di MAN Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang Tahun 2011. Thesis (published). Jurusan Tarbiyah. Program Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam. Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Salatiga. Available at: http://eprints.stainsalatiga.ac.id. (Access on February, 7th 2015).

Rehman, Asifa and Haider, Kamal. 2013. "The Impact of Motivation on Learning of Secondary School Students in Karachi: An Analytical Study". Educational Research International Vol.2 No.2. Available at: http://www.erint.savap.org.pk/PDF/Vol.2(2)/ERInt.2013(2.2-17).pdf. (Access on September, 3th 2014).

Sadowski, Katie. 2011. "The Difference Between Positive and Negative Reinforcement". Available at http://nspt4kids.com/parenting/the-difference-between-positive-and-negative-reinforcement/. (Access on September, 3th 2014)

Wafula, A. L, Malimbe, G. N., and Kafu, Patrick. 2011. "Classroom Management: The State of Positive Reinforcement in Secondary Education in Kenya". In International Journal of Current Research Vol. 3, Issue, 11, pp.064-067. Available at http://www.journalcra.com. (Access on September, 3th 2014).

Zirpoli, Thomas J. 2008. *Behavior Management Application for Teachers.* Fifth Edition. Canada: Pearson Education.