

Developing Social Skills of Austistic Children through Role Play

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Abstract—This article discusses about the use of role play to develop social and communication skill of autistics children in inclusive primary schools. Therefore, it is necessary to provide interventions that are designed and implemented in a sustainable and well-programmed manner through educational services for children with special needs in general and autism in particular. This research uses qualitative research method to show and analyze data as a basis for designing role play technique in developing social skill for autistics children. Then, experiment approach is used in the form of single subject research using A-B design. The data analysis is done using graphical visual analysis. The role play activities are conducted several meetings in order to develop social skills of interaction and communication. Thus, it is hope that role play can develop and improve the social skills of children with autism in the term of communication skills and interaction with friends, teachers, and all the school members they know. It is suggested that teachers in inclusive schools have to be able to improve the social skills of autistic children through various forms of role play.

Keyword—Autistics, Inclusive Primary School, Role Play, Social Skill

I. INTRODUCTION

Autism is a term used to describe a type of neurological problem that affects mind, perception, and attention. This disorder can inhibit or interfere the signals from the eyes, ears, and other sensory organs[2]. It generally weakens a person's ability to interact with other people for socialization activities or communication skills such as speaking and imagination. Thus, this disorder results in disruption or delay in the fields of cognitive, language, behavior, communication, and social interaction. It is a developmental disorder that affects the way a person communicates and interacts with others[3]. People with autism cannot meaningfully relate to others because of the inability of verbal and non-verbal communication.

The ability of social skills for autistic children can be meant as the ability to interact with peers, such as conducting interpersonal and personal behavior, completing academic tasks, accepting peer, and communicating with others[4]. Communication means an action in delivering and accepting a message or idea between two or more people which includes language and speaking skills. Through communication, human is able to create a two-way interaction with each other so that the message can be mutually understood.

In fact, the development of socialization and communication skills in autistic children occur not only in the setting of fellow autistic children, but it must be broader developed in the settings of non autistic children in general[5]. In this context, the teachers must have competence in creating a conducive environment that is able to facilitate the development of socialization and communication skills of autistic children. The main target of socialization and communication skills for autistic children that emphasizes in this study is role play especially in the context of the social skills in inclusive schools, which encourage the occurrence of social interaction between autistic children and non autistics children naturally. The social skills possessed by autistic children will actually become social asset for them in overcoming maladapted behavioral problems, such as enjoying their own world, confusion in starting interactions, and reluctance in social communication with the surrounding environment[6].

Putro Agus Harnowo (detik Health 2012: 3) states that there are four characteristics of social skills in children with autism: 1) like to be alone, children may not be interested in others or peer activities, and may be difficult to be entertained when depressed. 2) tend to be passive, children who do not make a spontaneous approach to others, but receive contact if the contact is started by someone else. 3) tend to be active in a strange manner, children who approach other children

spontaneously in strange or inappropriate ways and they can often give a little attention to the response they have approached. 4) tend to be more formal and rigid in groups. It is not only seen in adolescents and adults with autism, but it can also be seen in autistic children in primary school as well. Autistic children tend to use formal language and polite behavior. They can be very bound to rules in social situations. The same opinion to Meadan & Monda-Amaya (2008) who mention that social skills are competences that a) require individuals to start positive social relations, b) relate to peer acceptance to be able to adjust to school. Moreover, based on the above opinions, it can be interpreted that social skills are a skill to interact with others.

Further, communication is needed in expressing ideas or thoughts. For that reasons, humans are required to have the ability to communicate. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary in Edja Sadjaah dan Dardjo Sukarja, (1995) communication is the process of sending and receiving messages or news between two people or more in the appropriate way so that the message can be fully understood. Whereas, according to M. Amin (1986: 2) in Tarmansyah, (1995) communication is a broad term including language and the ability to speak together with other elements.

Based on the above understanding, it can be understood that communication is the process in delivering and accepting a message or idea between two or more people which includes language and speaking skills. Through communication, humans are able to create a two-way interaction with each other, so that the message can be mutually understood.

In addition, human communication includes the exchange of messages or ideas that are thought of, so that they can be conveyed to others. According to Tarmansyah (1999) the thought that is still in the form of messages must be changed and arranged in the form of symbols or signs. These processes occur in the brain which then the signals or signs will be in the form of nerve impulses. Then, it will be forwarded to the phonation organs and articulation organs. Thus, the signals or signs are received through the hearing mechanism for some others. When the sound wave is changed back in the form of nerve impulses to the auditory cortex, the message is then analyzed and translated.

In this matter, the communication treatment can be stimulated by using role play method. It is a method that can be used in conveying the subject matter, training and improving the language and speaking skills of the students. According to Djamarah(1996) socio-drama or role play method can be said as a method that basically dramatizes behavior in relation to social problems. On the

other side, R. Ibrahim dan Nana Syaodih S(1996)state that the method of socio-drama or role play is often used in teaching values and solving problems faced in social relationships with people in the family, school, or the community. From the above understanding, it can be understood that the role play method is a way or technique in which the teacher provides opportunities for the students to play certain roles found in social life.

The role play method used by the teacher in delivering the subject matter is expected to improve the students' understanding and ability on the specific subject. According to Zakiah Daradjat (1989: 301) there are some purposes of role play methods: 1) getting social skills, so that they are expected not to be awkward facing social situations in their daily lives. 2) eliminating feelings of shame and inferiority which can be trained through his own friends to dare to play a role in specific subject matter. 3) educating and developing the ability to express opinions in front of one's own friends or others. In conclusion, this research was aiming to develop social and communication skills through role play for autistic children in primary schools that implement inclusive education.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was an experimental research. According to Rosnow and Rosenthal in the book Juang Sunanto (2005)state that the design of experimental research outlines two groups design that use the design of A-B-A. The role play scenario that had been provided before was given as the treatment/intervention. This study was focusing on implementing the role play model for improving social skills of autistic children in primary schools that provided inclusive education. Then, A-B-A design was used to test the effectiveness of role play model using single subject research design in order to improve social skills of autistic elementary school children in inclusive education.

<i>Baseline (A1)</i>	<i>Intervention (B)</i>	<i>Baseline (A2)</i>
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Fig. 1: SSR with A-B-A design(Creswell, 1994)

Baseline (A1) : a condition of autistic children social skills before obtaining the intervention (pre-intervention).

Intervention (B) : a condition of autistic children social skills using role play technique during obtaining interventions.

Baseline (A2) : a condition of autistic children social skills after intervention (post-intervention).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The comparison result of the three parts of the research (the baseline (A1), intervention (B), and baseline (A2)) sessions can be seen as follows:

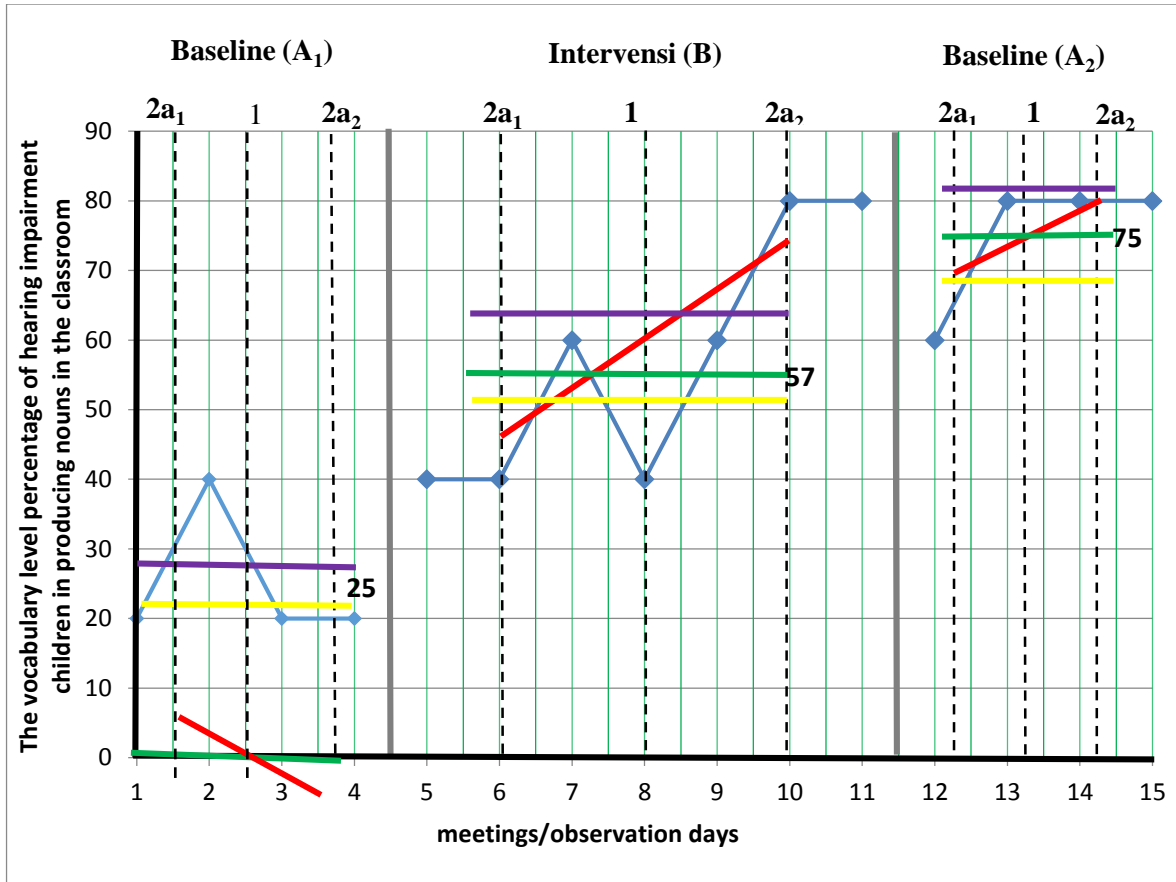


Fig. 2 Graphic analysis of social skill level of autistic children

Description :

- The percentage of vocabulary level
- Trend
- Upper limit
- Mean level
- Lower limit

Based on the graph, it can be seen that the study was stopped at the fourth meeting in the baseline (A1). It can be seen that the levels of children's social skills were varied: 20% in the first day, 40% in the second day, and it was dropped to 20% in the third day until the fourth day, and the mean level in this baseline session was 25. Then, the researchers continued giving intervention against children.

The length of the condition in the intervention phase (B) was 7, i.e. they were 40%, 40%, 60%, 40%, 60%, 70%, 70% from the first to the seventh session with the mean level in this condition was 57.14. After the treatment was given, the estimation of the direction tendency in this condition was increased. After seeing that the condition when the child was given intervention had been stable, then the researcher continued to the baseline (A2), with the length of the condition in this phase was 4, i.e. from the first to the fourth session were 60%, 80%,

80%, 80% and the mean level was 75. There was a tendency towards increasing social skills in children with autism.

In the intervention condition (B), the first observation wanted to see the children's social interaction in their environment. Next, the percentage of their ability to interact socially was 40%. Then it was increased gradually to 60%, next to 80% in the next observation. These showed that the trend of data traces was increasing.

The baseline condition, means the students were no longer being given intervention (A2). In the beginning observation the level of the children's social interaction ability was 60% and it was increased in the second and third observations with percentages 80% and 80%. Further, in the fourth observation the level of children's social interaction ability was stable at a percentage of 80%. These

showed that the trend of data traces in baseline conditions (A2) were increased.

Analysis between Conditions

The comparison result of the three parts of the research (the baseline (A1), intervention (B), and baseline (A2)) sessions can be seen as follows:

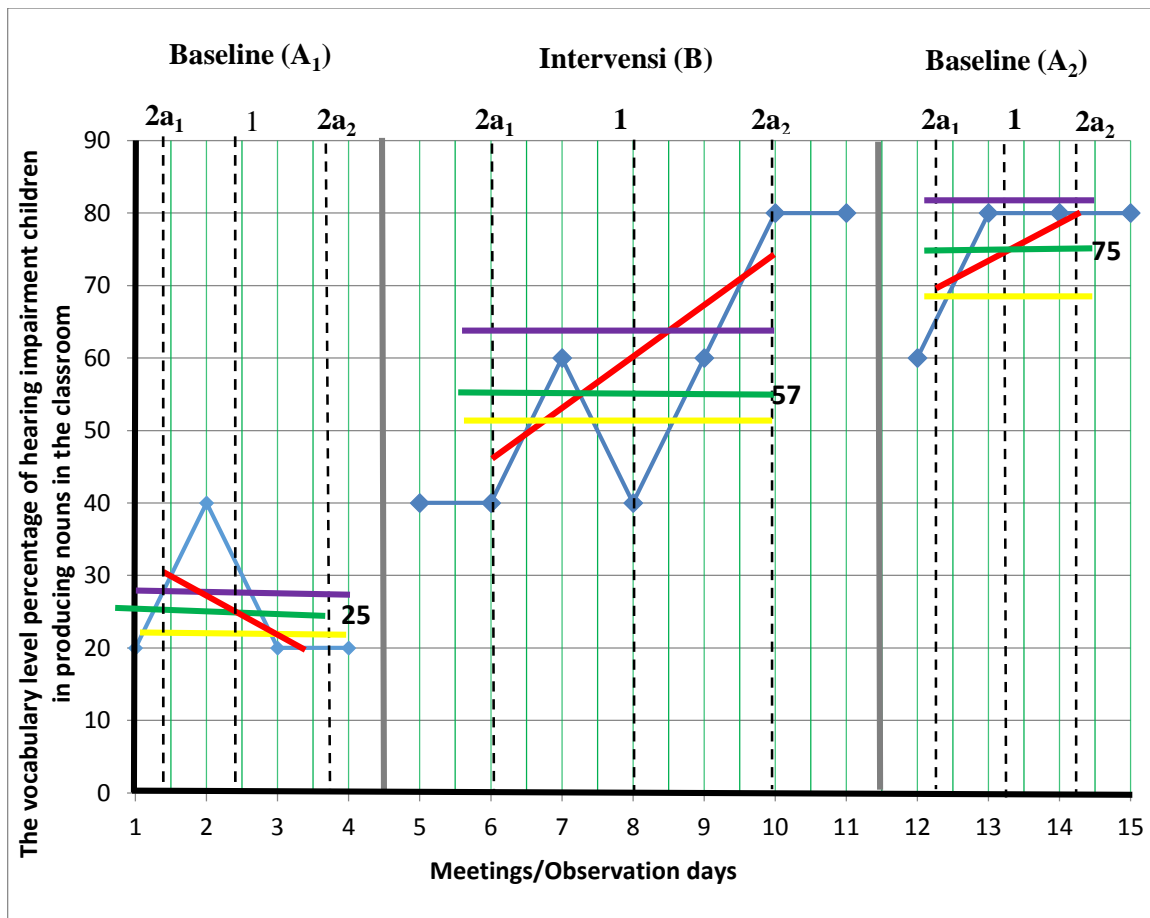


Fig. 3 Graphic analysis of autistic childrens' social skill level in between condition manner

- Description
- The percentage of vocabulary level
- Trend
- Upper limit
- Mean level
- Lower limit

Further, improving the social skill of autistic children at school is very important because it has a very important role in everyday life to establish communication between people around the environment. Thus, social skills for children with autism are also needed, so they can develop according to their potential. Autism is a very complex because it is such of severe neurological development disorder in a long life, which includes disorders of behavior aspects, social interaction, communication and language, as well as emotional disturbances and sensory perceptions or even the motoric aspects. The symptoms of autism appear before 3 years of age [14]. However, improving social skills for children with autism is not easy. It needs careful preparation from the researcher and attention to the condition of the child in following direction of the researcher. For this reasons, a specific treatment that attracts children's interest

must be done to improve the social skills of autistic children, so that they can interact well in their social life.

Based on this matter, role play model can be considered by the researchers in providing interventions. As stated by Ramayulis (2005), role play technique is the presentation of materials by showing demonstrations, both in the form of descriptions and reality. Every action is in the form of behavior in social relations which is then asked to some students to portray it. On the other side, role play is characterized by the application of stories to objects and repeating the pleasant behavior that students remember (Piaget in Siska, 2011). The results of the study explained that through the application of role play model, the social skills of autistic children in interacting with their environment can be improved.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that; 1) autistic children need to get social skills exercises such as communicating, interacting, and socializing with their peers or greeting their peers and school residents. It was assumed that these results turn out to the reality that the communication of autistic children needs to be improved because many of them have good intellectual abilities, yet they were weak in communicating and interacting.

In addition, the principals, classroom teachers, and special mentoring teachers were still limited in training children to have social skills. They were more focused on the learning process, meanwhile social skills were also important for autistic children in order to grow socially like other regular children, so that they can attend education at the inclusive schools and continue their education to a higher level according to their talents and interests. Therefore, the principal needs to facilitate the teachers to improve the social skills of autistic children with role play model in order to train children in communicating, interacting, and socializing to make them accepted in the community.

In conclusion, the relationship between these elements like parents, principals, class teachers, and special mentoring teachers was good. It can be shown in the accordance where the parents always give ideas to the school in carrying out the learning process, facilitate teaching aids, or special media for children with autism so that their children can learn comfortably. Thus, the parents always find solutions to help their children in providing the special mentoring teachers for instance in the matter of transportation.

B. Suggestions

It can be suggested that the classroom teachers and special mentoring teachers should be able to develop socialization and communication skills for autistic children both in the classroom and outside of school hours by understanding the characteristics and problems experienced by autistic children in developing social skills and communicate, interact,

and socialize with peers, teachers, school residents and the community. Next, the principals should facilitate classroom teachers by providing facilities and infrastructure as well as learning media in role playing. Similarly, the parents should help to train children in improving the social skills of autistic children at home.

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