

A Review of Research on Children's Peer Communication Ability from the Perspective of Core Literacy

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Abstract

"Peer communication ability" is present in various fields as a form of "core literacy" in a media-style format. This study primarily focuses on the literature concerning "children's peer communication ability." It reveals that the research theme centers on the study of the concept of peer communication ability, its structure, and influencing factors. Additionally, it explores the developmental patterns of peer communication ability, encompassing the overall developmental trajectory and critical periods. The study also delves into related research on peer communication ability, such as executive function, emotional regulation, family parenting styles, theory of mind, and peer relationships. Furthermore, the study investigates strategies for enhancing peer communication ability. Based on the requirements of preschool learning standards in various countries, this study identifies several research trends in related fields and discusses the findings in the context of "core literacy" education.

Keywords

Children's peer communication ability, Core Literacy, Preschool early childhood education

1. Introduction

Driven by the post-network information age of the knowledge economy, "core literacy"—a brand new concept of talent training has quietly appeared. Even under different political ideologies, historical development backgrounds, and economic development levels, organizations and countries have roughly the same understanding of "core literacy", all of which believe that knowledge learning should be carried out through practice and exploration, emphasizing the all-round development of human beings and realizing lifelong learning. It can be clearly seen from the "Seven Core Learning Areas" and "Eight Core Qualities" proposed by UNESCO and the European Union under the guidance of "Lifelong learning", to the "21st Century Skills" and "21st Century Competence" respectively launched by the United States and Japan in recent years, and to the "Core literacy system for Chinese Students" proposed by China. All organizations and countries without exception have put forward the requirements for students' communication skills. At the beginning of the education stage, the preschool stage is the foundation stage of personal development, and attaching importance to early childhood education has become the common pursuit of developed countries.

American early learning standards are relatively perfect in form and content, which has an important influence on the formulation and implementation of early learning standards in other countries. Especially when the United States put forward the requirements of "21st-century skills", different states have paid attention to early childhood education. The United States has no uniform early learning standards or subject learning standards for children between the ages of 3 and 5, and national standards for each subject are only for stages K1 to K12, which is similar to most countries in the world. Even if there are no national standards, the states have developed relatively similar areas of early childhood learning, which basically include: language and literacy, science, math, social and emotional, learning styles, physical development health and safety, social learning, and creative arts. These eight areas take into account both breadth and depth and pay attention to the content that is meaningful to children's lifelong learning.

Among them, "Peer Communication Ability" exists in various fields in a media way, such as "Speaking and Communicating" and "Listening and Understanding" in the field of language and literacy, "Social Relations" and "Knowing and Reasonably Expressing Feelings" in the field of social and emotional affairs, etc., all of which are the dimension indicators that researchers have clarified for the concept of "Peer Communication Ability".

2. Literature Review

This study mainly focuses on the literature about "Children's Peer Communication Ability", and finds that its research theme focuses on the definition of concept, assessment (measurement) methods, development characteristics, influencing factors, cultivation methods, and other aspects.

2.1 Concept and dimension of children's peer communication ability

Scholars have different opinions on the concept of peer communication ability. Most studies basically believe that peer communication refers to an interaction relationship established between children and their peers in the process of activities together.

Howes (1987) proposed that children's peer communication ability is the social ability that reflects children's successful communication with peers, and it is a kind of ability related to children's popularity, peer influence and peer communication sensitivity. Fan (2002) pointed out that children's peer communication ability is the ability of children to establish harmonious interpersonal relationships through learning and playing with peers. Zhang (2002), on the basis of comprehensive studies on children's peer communication ability, defined children's peer communication ability as the sum of children's ability to feel, adapt, coordinate, and deal with peer relationships in the communication process. Li (2004) believes that peer interaction is actually a kind of interpersonal relationship, but the prerequisite for the establishment of this relationship is that children are of the same age, so as to influence and interact with each other in daily activities. Some scholars have proposed that peer communication ability is related to children's acceptance and prestige in the group and is an ability to successfully carry out social communication. Other researchers believe that peer communication ability is relatively stable and a static representation with integrity and structure (Roper & Hinde, 1978).

The structure of children's peer communication ability is rich. Williams et al. (2009) proposed that peer rejection, peer avoidance, and social initiative are the main dimensions of children's peer communication ability. Zhang (2002) pointed out through research that the basic abilities of children's peer communication ability include relaxed sociability, empathy, communication skills, and collective concept, and believed that the structure of Chinese children's peer communication ability consists of four dimensions: verbal and non-verbal ability, social initiative, social disorder, and prosocial behavior. Wu and Zou (1995) took helping peers, being liked by peers, and aggressive behavior as the main dimensions of children's peer communication ability.

Although there are differences in the definition and content of peer communication, the common factors are inseparable from the concepts of peer and child communication. This study agrees with Zhang's (2002) discussion on children's peer communication ability and combines scholars' general understanding of the concept of children's peer communication ability to define children's peer communication ability: children's peer communication ability refers to the sum of many possibilities that children encounter in the process of dealing with peer communication in peer groups, including the initiative to initiate communication, the degree of relationship with others, and the ability and level of solving problems encountered in the process of communication.

2.2 Evaluation (measurement) method of peer communication ability

At present, there are two feasible ways to evaluate peer communication ability. One is to use behavior rating scales, behavior role playing tests, direct behavior ratings, and various social evaluation procedures. The second is qualitative

research methods, such as observation methods to investigate the quality of children's peer relationships, and then reflect on children's peer communication ability from the side.

Liu et al. (2018) adopted the peer nomination method when investigating children's peer relationships. The researchers asked the children to name three friends who wanted to play with them and those who wanted to play with them the least and to say the reasons for their choice. Peer nomination method belongs to the category of social measurement method, which is actually a very effective method to directly study the problem of peer relationship. However, if it is about peer communication ability, its measurement results can only reflect the level of communication ability from the side, and can not directly reflect the ability itself.

Wu (2008) drew on the Children's Play Observation Scale compiled by developmental psychologist Professor K. Rubin (1989) and the suggestions of relevant kindergarten teachers, and formulated the Natural Observation Table of Children's Communicative Behavior.

Other commonly accepted scales include: (1) The SIS-RS scale, a revised version of the Social Competency Rating System (SSIS), updated the usage norms and subscale entries in the scale to improve psychometric attributes, effectiveness scores, and associations with subsequent interventions, and has been used in all 50 states of the United States and other countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and the United Kingdom. (2) PKBS-2 is a behavioral rating scale designed to assess social skills and behavior problems in children aged 3-6 years. (3) Zhang (2002) used the method of factor analysis to explore the structure of peer communication ability and compiled the relevant scale, "Peer Communication Ability Scale for 4-6 years Children", which includes four dimensions of social initiative, verbal and non-verbal communication performance, social disorder and prosocial behavior, and is a scale widely recognized and used by Chinese academic circles at present.

In conclusion, it is not difficult to find that international scholars choose a variety of assessment tools, such as behavioral rating scales, behavioral role-playing tests, observation methods, etc., and tend to choose quantitative observation methods and teacher evaluation methods in natural situations to investigate children's peer communication ability and status quo. However, in the past 20 years, behavior rating scale is still the most commonly used assessment method, and most scholars use the teacher rating scale to understand children's peer communication status, so as to reflect children's peer communication ability from the side. Some scholars also use peer nomination method and direct observation method to select small samples for more detailed and in-depth research. In this study, it is believed that the scale compiled by Zhang (2002) is widely applicable and has been verified many times, and its localization, reliability, and validity are very reliable. In general, there are various methods to evaluate children's peer communication ability, each with its own advantages and disadvantages.

2.3 Developmental characteristics of children's peer communication ability

Many studies have elaborated on the relationship between Children's Peer Communication Ability and age, and their views all support that peer communication ability will show an increasing trend with the age of children.

Yang (2000) believes that children's peer communication ability will continue to increase in preschool, but the growth trend will gradually stabilize in the middle and later stages of the senior class. Among them, the peer communication ability of middle-class children increased the fastest. Li (2008) also believes that compared with children in small classes, children in middle classes develop their peer communication ability faster. Later, through in-depth research, scholars found that children's peer communication ability does not grow with age, and its growth rate will gradually slow down in the late middle class and early big class, and there will be no significant change in the later period. Many studies have also pointed out that children's peer communication ability has significant differences in gender variables. Liu (2009) found through research that children like to play with same-sex partners in small classes, but after entering the middle class, children are more inclined to choose the opposite sex to carry out game activities. Li (2012) proposed that compared with boys' passivity in language, girls prefer to use language to actively communicate. Girls usually like to cooperate and discuss solutions according to the problems that arise in the relationship, while boys are relatively poor in this development. In addition, many scholars have disputed the view that boys are more aggressive than girls. An increasing number of research results show that both girls and boys have aggressive tendencies and behaviors, but the ways of expressing aggression are different. For example, girls may be more likely to engage in non-confrontational forms of expression, such as gossiping and rumor-mongering, rather than choosing direct methods such as name-calling or fighting. Both direct aggression and relational aggression can predict future social maladjustment.

2.4 Research on influencing factors of children's peer communication ability

Combing through previous studies, it is found that there are many factors affecting the formation and development of

children's peer communication ability, such as the influence of parents, teachers, peers, and children's personality characteristics.

The results of Pettie and Mize (1997) show that parents influence children's peer communication ability mainly through the following ways: providing communication opportunities; Encouraging children to conduct peer communication; Helping children deal with communication conflicts; Change bad communication behavior. Scholar You (2001) proposed that according to the explanatory quantity of family factors, the factors of parents' influence on children's peer communication ability are as follows: parents' communication requirements, mother's parenting style, and occupation. Chen and Lu (2002) argued that there was a significant correlation between children's communicative problem behaviors and parents' parenting attitudes. Liu (2010) believes that kindergarten teachers' own quality and ability will have a direct or indirect impact on children's peer communication ability. Teachers' evaluation of children can directly affect peers' evaluation of children; Children's acceptance in the class is positively correlated with teachers' recognition of children. Rubin (1998) pointed out that peers play a very important role in whether an individual child can successfully socialize. Hartup (1998) believes that the experience of interacting with peers constitutes an important developmental environment for young children. Liu (2017) also proposed that children's own perception of communication behavior is also the key to influencing the peer communication relationship. It is true that there are young children who prefer to play or study alone, but when they need to interact and cooperate with their peers, they can quickly join the class group or peers. The stability of children's temperament makes them have a certain tendency in the way of communication and attitude with different companions. Pang(1991) found that popular children are positive, friendly, outgoing, lively, bold, and talkative; rejected children are extroverted, impatient, irritable, impulsive, and very active. Neglected children are introverted, quiet, chronic, small temper, are not easy to get excited and impulsive, and daring.

2.5 Research on cultivating ways of children's peer communication ability

Previous scholars have pointed out that the negative development of peer communication ability and peer relationships will have a short and medium-term impact on education, social psychology, and vocational fields. These studies received a lot of attention and spurred a lot of interest in developing preventive interventions. The logic is that timely interventions aimed at improving young children's peer relationships can reduce the risks associated with peer exclusion and isolation, promote healthy socialization, and promote positive long-term outcomes and that young children must be given the opportunity to learn and improve these behaviours, as communication skills are important to both their own and their peer group success. At present, many scholars have intervened through different cultivation methods.

For example, Dan et al. (2009) intervened in the performance games of children in middle and senior classes and conducted training on the four dimensions of children's peer communication ability through 2 groups of 12 games. The final results showed that there were significant differences in the scores of children in two dimensions of social initiative and verbal non-verbal control, which also confirmed the role of performance games in promoting the peer communication ability of middle and senior-class children. Kovess et al. (2016) found that video games can promote children's social interaction and prosocial behavior. Liu et al.(2018) experimentally examined the effects of short-term exposure to two-player cooperative/competitive electronic games on peer interaction and prosocial behavior of 60 children aged 4-6 and found that: 1) After exposure to games, children become more inclined to play with them, regard them as friends, and are more willing to interact with them; 2) Cooperation is more likely to induce children to like their partners than competitive games, and the winners of competitive games like their partners more than the losers; 3) Older children are more likely to socialize with peers than younger children; 4) Toddlers help their partners more than their non-friend peers. This suggests that two-player video games with suitable content for short contact are more beneficial to children's peer interaction and prosocial behavior development. Luo (2020) taught the children in the experimental class through four forms of music, including music rhythm, music singing, music appreciation, and music games, and observed, recorded, and analyzed the behavioral performance of children by observing the components of their communication ability in different activity classes. Children's specific performance and behavior in various kinds and times of musical activities in the communication ability dimension, children in the experimental class in the communication ability performance is more effective and intuitive, but the sample size of the study object is small, the intervention time is short, the scientific conclusion has certain limitations.

3. Results and discussion

In recent decades, peer communication ability has been the focus of research at home and abroad, and a lot of achievements have been made under the efforts of many researchers, including the structure of peer communication ability, the development characteristics of peer communication ability, and related research on peer communication ability. Through

literature review, the studies on peer communication ability can be divided into the following categories: (1) Research on the concept of peer communication ability, as well as its structure and influencing factors; (2) Research on the development law of peer communication ability, including the overall development trajectory and critical period; (3) Studies related to peer communication ability, such as executive function, emotional regulation, family parenting style, theory of mind, peer relationship, etc. (4) Research on the promotion of peer communication ability.

In this study, it is found that in relevant promotion studies, there are many cultivation methods, mainly cooperative learning, game courses, role-playing, parental participation, community education, etc., while music-oriented intervention methods are relatively rare, and the sample size of intervention does not reach the statistically significant effective number of people. In future research, relevant researchers can combine the teaching methods of music education to make up for the research gap in this aspect.

In contrast, the relevant international research is more in-depth and involves a wide range of content. Referring to the research in the past 10 years, international scholars pay more attention to intervention studies on peer ability development, mainly focusing on family parenting intervention and community learning interval intervention, but their research objects are mostly focused on special children, such as children with autism and children with language disorders. China's research on peer communication ability is relatively slow, and the number of survey and description studies accounts for the majority.

Based on the requirements of learning standards for preschool children in different countries, this study recognizes several research trends in related fields: (1) International organizations and countries pay more attention to the "core literacy of preschool children" year by year, and emphasize the content that is meaningful to children's lifelong learning; (2) With the change in educational trends, the dimension of "children's peer communication ability" exists in every field of children's learning in the form of "media", and the dimension content directed by it is gradually increasing; (3) Different educational trends and purposes will affect the definition of "children's peer communication ability". Therefore, this study believes that the study of children's peer communication ability from the perspective of core literacy has the following practical significance:

1) Regarding the major issues of international education today, "Core Literacy" is the focus of educational research, and the cultivation of "Children's Peer Communication Ability" is the consensus of educational research, which is in line with the current educational situation;

2) Extend from "Student Development Core Literacy" to "Core Literacy of Preschool Children", effectively integrate the educational concept and purpose of "Core Literacy" between different levels, and pay close attention to the connection between kindergarten and primary school training.

3) Lay a practical foundation for the establishment of the concept of "Core Literacy of Preschool Children" and provide data support for educational practice activities;

4) It has complementary significance to the practical research field of "Children's Peer Communication Ability";

5) According to the new trend and trend of core literacy, the measurement tools of "Children's Peer Communication Ability" can be improved to make up for the shortcomings in the measurement of children's peer communication ability in the past;

6) In this way, we can pay attention to the special training methods and paths of interdisciplinary pedagogy (early childhood education) and art (music), provide relevant intervention methods for the construction of curriculum teaching system in first-line kindergartens, first-line kindergarten teachers and parents, and carry out active collaborative parenting activities.

With the reform of educational thoughts, the requirements for cooperation, communication, and creativity in "Core Literacy" are gradually improved. In the future, the construction and influencing factors of "Core Literacy of Preschool Children" are bound to be diversified, and the research on its cultivation methods will also be interdisciplinary.

4. Conclusion

With the deepening of research on "Core Literacy", "Core Literacy of Preschool Children" has entered a critical period of reform and development. It is of great significance for the development of early childhood education and national education to carry out relevant research on "Children's Peer Communication Ability". Although the research results are remarkable, there are still some shortcomings, such as the lack of local research in the content, most of them borrow international research; In terms of scope, the research content of domain integration is few. Lack of comparative study between urban and rural areas; Lack of peer communication in 0-3-year-old infants; Training methods are still weak and insufficient. It is hoped that future scholars can strengthen the research in these aspects, constantly enrich the research content of children's peer communication, improve the research methods, propose concrete improvement strategies, and fill the gap in historical research, so as to promote the effective development of peer communication related activities.

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