INITIAL LEARNING TO READ IN KINDERGARTEN – FORMAL AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract
In the following article the author briefly describes the organisation of Polish education system on the kindergarten level, mentions documents applicable for a Polish teacher working with children in kindergarten and makes an attempt to answer the following question: does the model of readership education influence the readiness for reading and reading skills of six-year-old children?
The answer to the above question has been obtained thanks to the information about the models of readership education which are applied by kindergarten teachers, models' characteristics and the children's level of skills in the readiness for reading and reading skills depending on the model of their readership education. It has also been analysed how gender, the level of verbal phonological memory, participation in early learning to read (earlier than from six years of age) and the number of years of kindergarten attendance differentiates the six-year-olds in terms of the readiness for reading and reading skills. The author intends to present the causal model which enables understanding the correlation and dependency between the accepted variables. The author does not determine the superiority of one model over others. Path diagrams were used for the graphic description.
The article is an attempt to present the process of investigating the assumption that having contact with written word before the age of six, using optional, unspecified method of learning to read offered by a teacher, together with accepted model of teacher-student cooperation, will facilitate the process of shaping positive attitude towards written culture. It will also allow children to achieve certain abilities necessary in the learning to read process.

Key words: pre-school education, reading education models, learning to read

1. INTRODUCTION

In Poland, children between the age of three and six are provided with different forms of pre-school education. Pre-school education takes place in kindergartens and pre-school classes in primary schools, branches of kindergartens, kindergarten

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units (open daily), centres of pre-school education (open on certain days of a week) and individual kindergarten classes aimed at children, who due to health reasons cannot attend kindergarten.

Children from three to four years old have the right to pre-school education. Pre-school education is obligatory for five-year-old children. Pre-school or school education is obligatory for six-year-old children. The type of the facility and the place where it will be conducted was left for parents to decide (Jaszczyszyn, Andrzejewska, 2009). As of 1 January 2014 all six-year-old children are to go to school obligatorily.

The basic documents binding for teachers engaged in the education of pre-school (3-5-year-old) children are 'The essential curriculum of pre-school education for kindergartens, pre-school classes in primary schools and other forms of pre-school education' and for six-year-old children 'The basis of general education for primary schools' (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 27 August 2012, item 977, Annex 1 and 2). Pursuant to the process of supporting the development and education of children included in pre-school education described in the documents, pre-school institutions (apart from pre-school education centres exempt from implementing all contents of 'The essential curriculum') implement the pre-school education program chosen by them. Moreover, it should be mentioned that in Poland there is a wide range of pre-school and school education programs supported with teaching materials and teacher's guides. Each of them obligatorily includes the guidelines of 'The essential curriculum'. The Ministry of National Education (MEN) does not approve them. (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 21 June 2012).

While working with children, there are two ways of organizing the course of learning to read. The first one is called 'traditional' or 'standard' (MT), and the second one is called 'alternative' or 'holistic' (MH). Between them appeared extended models, in which the standard way of learning to read is enriched by elements taken from the alternative model.

Changes in the organization and the course of readership education were set in motion by scientific knowledge about the process of learning to read and write, adults' own experience, a belief in great potential hidden in children (Pereira, 2012), and information received from abroad about different ways of teaching children younger than six years olds to read (and write). Books by e.g. Eve Malmquist (1987), Hanna Dobrowolska – Bogusławska (1991), Glenn and Janet Doman (1992) or Irena Majchrzak (1995), among others, became an inspiration for practising teachers.

In 2009, pursuant to the decision of obligatory school education for the six-year-olds, it was decided, that 'the development of reading skills should be combined with learning to write and it is the responsibility of pre-school education teachers, while teachers working in kindergartens and in pre-school classes in primary schools (one-year preparatory classes) are responsible for the development of readiness for learning these skills by children at school' (The essential curriculum

with comments, vol.1., 2009:30). Considering a long-standing pre-school experience (Arciszewska, 2002), it was remarked that 'at the level of pre-school education, children can be taught to read because proprietary programs have to extend the contents recommended in the essential curriculum. However, it cannot happen at the expense of developing in children the readiness for learning to read combined with learning to write' (Essential curriculum with comments, vol. 1, 2009, p. 30).

It is only a natural consequence of these assumptions to: indicate school as a primary place where the process of learning to read starts, emphasize the age to start education as 6 - 7 years old and apply the analytical – synthetic method in working with children. The latter assumption finds its justification in the research results that confirm that there is a significant relation between phonological abilities and success in learning to read and the research prove that phonological awareness is a strong predicator in determining future success in learning to read and write (those who perform phonemic analysis and synthesis more efficiently, manage better) (Krasowicz-Kupis, 1990). Phonological awareness will be manifested in: a) the ability to divide words into sounds and determine the number of sounds in a word in an either non-verbal way – by tapping or verbal way – by giving their number, b) the comparison of different words and their parts, c) manipulating sounds (Awramiuk, 2006).

In the discussions on the organization and the course of readership education (including learning to read and write), the following are worth taking into consideration: a) language conditioning in the selection of teaching methods, b) specificity arising from the children's developmental age and the stage of child's reading development. With all the variety of methods, it should be remembered that linguistic features of a given language determine the initial process of learning to read and write. Elżbieta Awramiuk (2006) points out the issue, which was mentioned in many discussions, that the method of learning to read and write should be adjusted to the phonetic, morphologic and orthographic properties of a given language and quotes arguments in favour of this thesis. At the same time, she makes an important remark concerning the discussed subject: '[…] it is not about the methodological innovations or variety of work techniques, but about the bases for learning to read and write in a given language system, which means - the bases determined by the features of the acquired language and its orthographic system' (Awramiuk, 2006: 75; Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, Seidenberg, 2001; Sochacka, 2004).

Children become readers when they understand what they read, can apply and transfer their knowledge and skills to a new context and are strongly motivated to read. Moreover, it should be remembered that reading and writing as well as other forms of communication, are organized within a culture (they differ in terms of ideology and models of parent-child interaction and general socialization models) (Majchrzak,1995: 4; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1995: 149).

2. THE AIMS OF RESEARCH

The present study focuses on finding out in what way the readership education model of the six-year-olds influences their readiness for reading and reading skills, at the same time emphasizing the possible role of gender, phonological memory and number of years of kindergarten attendance. The exploration aims were divided according to the subsequent stages of research of diagnostic – verification type, undertaken in order to gather some knowledge of given phenomena (facts) and their conditioning. The character of research (correlative) determined the basic aims.

The aim of *the diagnostic stage* was to explore, identify (recognize) certain phenomena known as main potential independent variables (readership education model of the six-years-olds) and side variables (gender, level of phonological memory, number of years of kindergarten attendance), which can but do not have to determine the occurrence of a given phenomenon, that is a dependent variable (readiness for reading and reading skills). Independent, intermediary and dependent variables were sought by referring to other research and theories.

The aim of *the verification stage* was to establish the existence of correlation (or its lack) between readership education model and defined skills of children making up the readiness for reading and reading skills with regard to their gender, level of verbal phonological memory and number of years of kindergarten attendance (that is factors chosen by the researcher). An emphasis was placed on the verification of the research assumptions with the use of statistical indicators.

The aim of the third research stage was *to explain* relationships between the readership education model versus the readiness for reading and reading skills of the six-year-olds. The use of non-experimental, correlative-regressive analyses within the 'standard' scope in the research leaves the causally oriented problem without an answer. The path analysis allowed for better application of research data and enabled (as a method) hypotheses verifying, concerning the structure of causal relationship in the determined set of variables (Gaul, Machowski, 2006: 362). Within the path analysis it is possible to obtain two important results: 1) verification of causal structure of variables and 2) decomposition of correlation of pairs of variables, that is dividing them into components connected with the causal influence (indirect and direct) and into components connected with the non-causal influence (Gaul, Machowski, 2006: 370).

3. RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

The starting point for the research was to establish whether the copy of what has to be done according to the model defined in the pedagogical literature as 'traditional' (MT) and 'holistic' (MH) has positive or negative consequences for the readiness for reading skills of six-year-old children in the course of their participation in the process of readership education. On the basis of the currently conducted re-

search an idea was created that activities within the traditional model (the so-called 'traditional method of learning to read') in kindergarten, shape the whole later process of acquiring reading skills with a negative result for the level of reading skills of children in 1-3 grades (Dolata, Murawska, Putkiewicz, 1997). It was the basis for formulating (Jaszczyszyn, 2010) research problems for diagnostic and verification stages. Whereas, for the empirical verification four assumptions were made, which are not cause and effect hypotheses but speculations whether there are or are not relationships - that is the co-existence or lack of co-existence - between certain classes of the phenomenon.

1) The reading skills and readiness for reading (in terms of technique and meaning) are determined by the implementation of a defined readership education model.
2) Children educated according to the holistic model of readership education more often than those educated in the traditional model, reveal reading comprehension skills.
3) The level of phonological memory, gender and number of years of kindergarten attendance diversifies the six-year-olds in terms of the tested skills of both the readiness for reading and reading skills.
4) Teachers' activities within readership education determine the acquisition of skills indicating the readiness for reading and reading skills.

4. VARIABLES

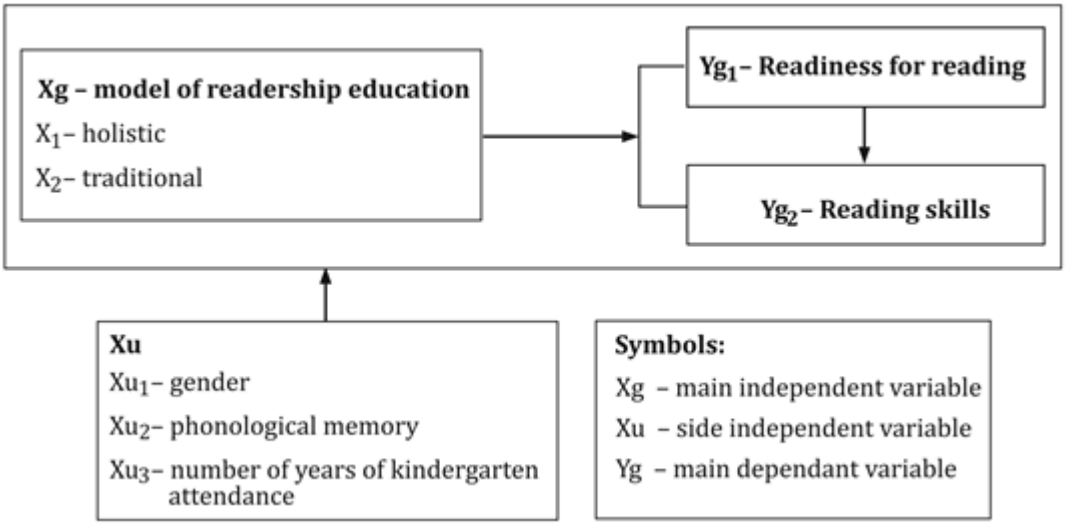

Figure 1 Chart showing relationships between variables (source: own work).

4.1 Dependent variables

The readiness for reading – according to the definition of the term 'readiness for reading' after G. Krasowicz – Kupis (2006), who defined it as 'the achievement by the child of such level of physical, social and psychological development that the child becomes sensitive and susceptible to systematic learning to read and write. The sensitivity characterizes the sufficient degree of interest in the knowledge provided at school (emotion-motivation aspect is determined here). The susceptibility means that the material provided at school has to be understood, possible to remember and learn 'in a skilful way' (Krasowicz – Kupis, 2006: 4). This in turn means that a child has to be at such level of cognitive development that he/she can use instructions, hints and methodological support aimed at teaching the child to read and write (reference to the technical and cognitive aspect). To assess the readiness for reading of the tested children, a set of tests was used. The ability to use already acquired words was tested (Brzezińska, 1987). What is more, metalinguistic skills were assessed (Krasowicz – Kupis, 1999) along with a rate of naming objects (Szczerbiński, Pelc-Pękala, 2007), ability to name letters, and aural phonological memory (Krasowicz, 1995).

Reading skills – the understanding of the term comes from G. Krasowicz, who defined reading as a 'complex psycholinguistic process based on decoding a text and interpreting its content' (1999: 19). To assess the reading skills of tested children, a meaning-comprehension questionnaire was used, created by J. Bałachowicz (1988) and M. Grzywak – Kaczyńska (1988). Reading skills in the technical dimension were also assessed, using a list of characteristics defining reading strategy by Sochacka (2004) and rate-of-reading questionnaire – 'Attempts to read for class 0' by Bogdanowicz (2009).

4.2 Independent variables

The readership education model - the term 'model' is defined as a pattern, according to which something has to be done. The emphasis is put on the typical character of implementing 'something' (for a given period, place or a group) and later imitating the way of implementation. Model is also understood as a description which shows the activity, structure, features, relationships of the phenomenon. It is important to define the content of the expression 'model solution'. According to the second quoted definition, it can be accepted that it is a description which shows the activity, structure […] relationship of the phenomenon.

Models determine a selection of strategies and methods which enable children to acquire competences. Their analysis will help to identify the readership education model. In order to define the implemented readership education model in kindergartens, the following were used: a teacher-interview questionnaire and an assessment questionnaire of teacher procedures created by Ewa Arciszewska (2002). These procedures were later assigned to 'traditional' activities (MT indicators) or

'holistic' activities (HM indicators). The mentioned models usually do not occur in the 'clear' form. We rather deal with a teaching procedure indicating the predominance of activities attributed to the traditional or holistic model.

The following activities were attributed to the HM model: lack of limitations as for the age at which the child begins learning to read, resignation from books teaching to read in favour of teacher's texts and texts created by children, children can learn all the alphabet letters, classes are conducted in small groups and individually, children are provoked to active reading, the model 'sound – letter' is abandoned in favour of the model 'meaning – sound' as well as teaching aids enabling children's self-control are introduced. (Arciszewska, 2002: 128). When a child discovers a relationship between sound and a letter, the teacher starts using analytical-synthetic method while working with that child.

When it comes to the MT model, the following activities were assigned to it: analytical-synthetic exercises are conducted, children start learning letters when most of them can pronounce sounds or at least can indicate a sound in the word-initial, children can learn 22 letters and the letter 'j', basic words and picture alphabet is taught, one letter a week is introduced, texts are made up of the letters which exclude phonetic difficulties, all children learn to read from identical teaching material, loud reading in front of the teacher and group is common, the diagnosis of skills is in the form of 'questioning'. Global passive reading of words in the situation of labelling objects in the classroom takes place. The activities included in the traditional model are called – technical.

4.3 Side independent variables

Gender is considered the first side independent variable. During the research planning phase, it was assumed that the factor as a relatively constant property of each tested person, can influence his/her learning skills, behaviour and personality. However, when talking about the gender of a learning person, uncompromising judgments should not be formed as there is a certain tendency in behaviours of girls and boys of a given age group. The assessed group differed in terms of gender because it consisted of girls and boys. While the group of teachers, due to feminization of the profession, was made up of women.

Phonological memory is the second side independent variable – it is thought that along with the assessment of phonematic and phonemic hearing, the ability to distinguish and pronounce sounds as well as remembering and reproducing them is necessary for learning to read. According to G. Krasowicz (1995: 2), we should not assess aural perception without the aspect of verbal memory and particularly without one of the components, that is the phonological code (the ability of arranging phonological information in the memory). It is something between long-term (LTM) and short-term (STM) memory and is defined by the term 'working memory'. It consists of central managing system and two subsystems: a phonological loop and a visual- spatial sketchbook. The phonological loop (articulation) is connected with

verbal information, visual - spatial sketchbook is connected with picture information. The articulation loop also stores information about the order of presented elements – sounds, letters and phonemes. Many researchers say that it is more related to the reading skill than remembering and reproducing single sounds. Children with reading and writing difficulties have problems with the use of the articulation loop.

The number of years of kindergarten attendance is the third side independent variable – the quantitative growth of children's participation in kindergarten education and the extension of the time of educational influence is a necessity. Necessity arising from the chance of undertaking educational, social and health activities by institutions, preventing exclusion and supporting the educational start of children (Jaszczyszyn, Andrzejewska, 2007). When it comes to children in pre-school age, the more time of educational influence they are provided with, the more it increases their chances of success at school and future life. When designing research, it was assumed that child's achievements may depend on the influence of the time factor of the kindergarten environment. The group of six-year-olds participating in the research consisted of children attending kindergarten for the first time, as well as for second, third and fourth year.

5. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Research was conducted in groups of six-year-old children (daily groups). Non-probabilistic technique of sample selection consisting in purposive sampling was applied. Testing groups of children and their teachers it was accepted that sometimes it is better to select a sample on the basis of knowledge about the tested population and research aims (Babbie, 2001) This type of selection is sometimes chosen by researchers when they are interested in studying a series of events deviating from the principle. These are cases which do not match the strictly determined patterns of attitudes and behaviours, but which help to understand better regular patterns (Babbie, 2001). Thus, applying the knowledge about the tested population, its characteristics and subgroups, the elements which represent it well were chosen. The sample was chosen so that individuals revealing certain attributes were included in the research.

The planned research was preceded by pilot studies, which took place in the same time sequence and with the use of a set of research tools. In the course of the pilot studies research tools were verified and improved. The following research methods were applied: test of school achievements (applied at some stages), diagnostic survey, document analysis and statistical analysis. Before the research started a consent of kindergarten principles and the parents of the six-year-olds was obtained to conduct the research. Tests of skills considered as important for the maturity for reading and reading skills were carried out individually. Making a good contact with the child through introducing by the first name and asking questions of neutral character was taken into consideration. In this way a positive motivation

to take part in the tests was achieved. After presenting a task, the child had the opportunity to ask a question, and the researcher had the opportunity to explain to the child what was not clear to him/her. The time of individual tests depended on the kind of test (between 10 and 30 minutes). During these tests teachers organized activities for the remaining children to stop the exchange of information among them on what a given test concerned. An interview was conducted with teachers working with the tested children. The teachers could answer questions orally or in writing. The obtained information was used to determine the model of readership education implemented among the assessed children.

6. THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE COURSE OF RESEARCH

There were 348 children participating in the research, including 182 boys (52,3%) and 166 girls (47,7%), and 16 teachers working in 16 institutions where the research was conducted. 317 children (91,09%) attended kindergarten in big cities, 31 children (8,91%) in small towns and villages.

In the tested community, 91,1% of children were 6 years old (7 participants were 5 years of age, 24 participants were 7 years of age). The research was conducted in a homogenous group in terms of age (six-year-olds). The average age of children was 6,4 at the beginning of the research.

Within the scope of phonological memory the assessed group attained on average 25 scores, that is 89,28% of attainable scores. The lowest result was attained by 1 child (0,3%) and the highest by 52 children (14,49%). 27 scores was the most often result. The middle result was 25 scores. The results indicating the correct development level of phonological memory were achieved by 223 children (64,1%) but 125 children (35,9%) achieved results indicating phonological memory disorders.

The centres attended by children differed as far as the implementation of the model of readership education is concerned. 118 children (33,9%) attended centres that use the holistic model of readership education (MH) and 230 children (66,1%) attended kindergartens that use the traditional model (MT). The number of years of kindergarten attendance significantly differentiates the groups distinguished due to the model of teaching (χ^2 = 27,293, df = 3, p = 0,000). In the group learning according to the holistic model more children attended kindergarten, but attended it longer. As there were differences in the probability of appearing in the sample between individual members of population, so in order to ensure the representative picture of the population, individual observations were given weights. Thanks to the procedures that even the differences between groups, children in the tested group did not vary among each other when the number of years of kindergarten attendance and kind of readership education is concerned. Moreover, the level of phonological memory did not significantly differentiate groups statistically, distinguished due to the model of readership education (χ^2 = 0,0083, df = 3, p = n.i).

7. THE METHODS OF ANALYSES OF OBTAINED RESULTS

In the statistical analyses of the obtained results basic descriptive statistics were used which characterize parameters of value level and parameters of dispersion and standard techniques of multi-variable analyses. The relation between the variables was presented in the form of data matrix. Since the relation between variables was tested on the interval or ratio (proportional) scale, the co-efficient of linear correlation *r* Pearson was used as the measure of power direction. The co-efficient refers to the prediction of value and defines in a way how close we should get when predicting the mean value of one variable (dependent variable) on the basis of what is known of another variable. The method of prediction applied here is the method of linear regression. There was a situation in the conducted analysis when one variable was influenced at the same time by a number of independent variables. So then the method of multiple regression was applied and the co-efficient of multiple regression (R) was calculated. The co-efficient determines at what degree *n* of considered independent variables determines the dependent variable.

The method of structural modelling was also applied. It consists of such statistical techniques as: regression analysis, (method of multiple linear regression), variance analyses (ANOVA) and multi-variable correlation analyses (technique of factor analysis, technique of path analysis). In order to support the interpretation of factors, factor rotation was carried out because frequently the first factor represents the so-called general factor and explains a large part of total variability. The application of varimax rotation led to obtaining a new set of factor charges. Thanks to the method of orthogonal rotation it was the easiest to interpret factors in the situation when they were strongly connected with the given variables and there was no relation with other variables. Besides, the technique of multivariable analysis, which is path analysis, was applied in the analysis. It was used for formulating causal models and for understanding relations between variables. Except graphic presentation of the network of relations between variables, path analysis showed the power of relations.

The studied models are accompanied by the so-called path diagrams. They were used for illustrations of models and graphic descriptions equivalent to the recording of mathematical equations specifying the structural model. The character of the research problem required putting emphasis on the exploration of causal structures in the collected data. All calculations were performed in the *SPSS* program.

8. THE MODEL OF READERSHIP EDUCATION VS READING ABILITIES AND READINESS FOR READING OF SIX-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

In the model, three exogenous variables (‘of external sources’) describing the features of socialization situation of the tested six-year-olds (model of readership education and the number of years of kindergarten attendance) and the feature of

each individual (gender) were considered. Exogenous variables are not correlated with each other (it excludes the risk of collinearity), which results in the fact that subgroups of the studied six-year-olds taught in accordance with the MT or MH do not differ with each other in terms of gender and the number of years of kindergarten attendance (weighing effect). Translating it into the research procedure it was assumed that the decision about the choice of education (as well as readership) model, the length of the influence of the kindergarten on children and their gender (biological conditioning) are placed outside children. It can be expected that each of the variables can have an influence on phonological memory. Therefore phonological memory will be the first exogenous variable ('of internal sources').

Three exogenous variables explain in total only 3% of the variability of phonological memory. So it is the consequence of a different number of years of kindergarten attendance (corrected R2 = 0,020). This property is - to a considerable degree - determined by other factors (biological, environmental, cultural), which are not considered in the model. The analysis of regression in which phonological memory is a function of three predicators shows that it depends only on the number of years of kindergarten attendance – the more years the child has spent in kindergarten, the higher the score he/she achieved in aural phonological memory test. On average girls and boys have the same level of scores in aural phonological memory. Also the six-year-olds learning by MH and MT do not differ with each other in the level of aural phonological memory.

In the subsequent stages, the sequential factors G1 (operations of analysis on phonological particles), G2 (operations of synthesis on phonological particles), G3 (operating with vocabulary) and G4 (phonemic analysis) describing different dimensions of readiness for reading, were attached to the described model.

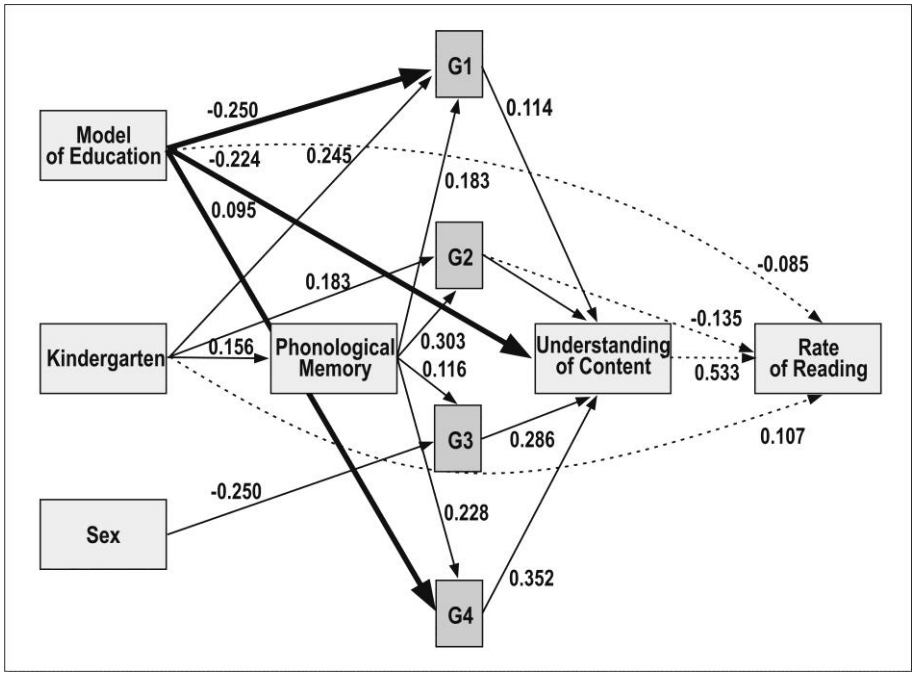

Figure 2. The rate of reading as the dependent variable.

The readership education model implemented by teachers influences indirectly the rate of reading (through understanding), but also influences (although weakly) directly and negatively the rate of reading. So the traditional readership education model (MT) negatively influences the understanding of content and (independently) the rate of reading.

It is noteworthy that the time spent in kindergarten influences indirectly the rate of reading (via G2). It also influences directly the rate of reading, but not the understanding of content. It may result from the contact with kindergarten environment which is rich in symbols. While interpreting obtained results and taking made comments into consideration, the conclusions below were formulated. The conclusions are at the same time a verification of the assumptions made in the study that are not cause and effect hypotheses but a guess assuming that the relations either do or do not exist.

The results of analyses showed that the readiness for reading and reading skills are partly determined by the implementation of a defined reading education model. Therefore, the results partly confirm the first assumption.

The higher level of the ability to perform operations on phonological particles [syllables and middle-syllabic units (rhymes)] (G1) characterizes children taught in accordance with the holistic model of reading education.

The ability to perform the operation of synthesis on phonological particles [syllables, sounds and middle-syllabic units (alliterations)] together with the knowledge of letters (G2) is not connected with the model of readership education. The model of readership education is not connected with the ability of operating with vocabulary (G3). Children educated in the traditional model of readership education (MT) have higher values in performing phonemic analysis (G4). Children educated according to the holistic model (MH) more often than those educated in the traditional model display the skill of reading comprehension. The results totally confirm the second assumption.

Moreover, the model of readership education influences indirectly the rate of reading (through understanding), but also influences (although weakly) directly and negatively the rate of reading. So the traditional model of readership education influences negatively the understanding of content and (independently) the rate of reading.

The analyses enabled the third assumption to be reviewed. The assumption refers to the level of phonological memory, gender and the time of influence of the kindergarten, and potentially diversifies the influence of the variables on the readiness for reading and reading skills of the six-year-olds. The results did not confirm that the six-year-olds who learn according to the holistic and traditional model differ from each other in the level of aural phonological memory. Moreover, on average girls and boys have the same level of scores in aural phonological memory.

The time spent in kindergarten influences the performance of operations on phonological particles (G1) directly and indirectly by shaping phonological memory. The kindergarten environment can be regarded as a variable shaping G1, and it takes place only partially due to phonological memory.

The time of the influence of kindergarten and the level of aural phonological memory indirectly and directly influence G2, that is the ability to perform the operation of synthesis on phonological particles (along with the knowledge of letters).

The ability to operate with vocabulary does not depend on the number of years of kindergarten attendance. However, just like factors G1 and G2, it depends on aural phonological memory. Girls are better at using already learned words than boys.

The ability to perform phonemic analysis (G4) as all previous factors is determined by aural phonological memory. In this case a weak influence of readership education is also revealed.

The results of qualitative analyses based on concluding as for the course of the organization of readership education in kindergarten confirm the fourth assumption. The implementation of a defined model in practice conditions the level of skills acquisition, as well as the readiness for reading as well as acquiring reading skills by six-year-old children.

The results obtained by children in the research are conditioned by the features of the Polish language, but also by the model of readership education, which defines arbitrarily the way teachers should act at the initial stage (before writing)

and the key stage (learning to write) at the analytical and phonological level (classification by G. Krasowicz-Kupis). Consequently it leads to the situation, when children achieve - in the course of initial learning to read (and write) - a defined language awareness referring to the phonological and orthographic subsystems as well as the attitude and motivation to turn to written texts and read them. At the same time it is the trend of explaining the final effect of the implementation of the model of readership education that is reading comprehension.

Therefore, the knowledge of the written word is not perceived as a set of technical abilities, but as a 'way of experiencing meaning of the surrounding world'. Research carried out by Marilyn Cochran – Smith (1995: 149) showed the analysis of social organization and the meaning of this type of activities. When children were continuously and consequently involved in situations concerning reading and writing, those skills became part of the way they interact with adults and other children. Elizabeth Goldman and C. Ralph Adler (2006) offered a following list of areas of parents' expectations and actions key in activating the process of written word formation, at the very beginning of the process:

1) Willingness for the child to read: striving for the child to become a reader, desire for the child to have great dreams and that they come true.
2) Providing help for the child in the process of learning to read: showing the child that reading is a skill that can be learned, helping him/her in finding books that he/she is going to like, creating opportunities for the child to observe reading adult, going to the library together, writing letters to relatives – sisters, brothers – substituting spoken words for written ones, reading before bed.
3) Spending time together: having long conversations, discussing with the child what we are doing, asking the child how he/she spent it's time, encouraging the child to ask adults about interesting parts of the surrounding world, and answering questions that are formed by the child in accordance with the adult's knowledge.
4) Helping the child hear the sounds in words, that are uttered during conversations: stimulating the sense of hearing when the child is crowing and learning to create words, helping the child in rhyme formation e.g. "kitty" and "witty", singing songs and reciting children poems. Now it is ready to read […].
5) Showing interest and helping the child learn letters: learning the alphabet from the first letter to the last one, associating the letters with objects known by the child, looking for letters in the surrounding world and naming them, practicing writing all the letters.
6) Helping the child learn the meaning of words: teaching the child that all things have a name, familiarizing the child with names of colours and names of foods eaten by the child and adults, introducing names of the animals and types of weather, teaching the child to walk, run, jump and use grammar structures correctly.

7) Providing assistance in practicing reading skills: encourage the child to read its favourite book aloud, reading the book together with the child, reading it interchangeably, reading it 'over and over again' (the adult does not pay attention to the reading until the child utters the words correctly – than the adult praises the child).
8) Helping the child understand what he/she is reading about: asking him/her to descried what he/she is reading about – what happened? Why? How did it end? Talking about the child just read, asking the child for his/her opinion on the story and listening to the answer.

All actions mentioned above are broadly considered *teaching,* as 'any kind of action undertaken by a person who tries to help other in learning' (Gage, 1978:14).

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