

FATHERS' PERCEPTION AND ROLE IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN OF URBAN AREA

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Abstract

Focusing on language development in early years is essential because child's brain development and language acquisition occur at a rapid rate during these years. Fathers are the most proximal individuals who practice scaffolding for developing language and communication skills in children. This research provided information about fathers' perception and role in language development of the pre-primary children of urban area. This study has revealed some ideas about the fathers' role in language development of pre-primary aged children of urban area of Bangladesh. This study is a phenomenological qualitative study. It mainly gives emphasis on extensive and in-depth interview and observation of any situation or event. This study has focused on two objectives (1) To know the perception of the fathers about the language development of their children. (2) To know the fathers' role in the language development of their children. According to fathers' opinion, fathers have positive attitude about language development but they have lack of proper knowledge regarding this. Data indicated that fathers possess some knowledge regarding showing positive behavior. Fathers need to be more aware regarding their children's language development area. The researcher has observed the daily activities in both homes that the fathers need to be more aware of buying story books for their children which is related to language development area. The study suggests that the government of Bangladesh, INGO's (International Non Government Organization) & NGO's (Non Government Organization) should give emphasis on basic language development area in pre-school children by involving the fathers who have one or more preschool children. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education should also identify the most effective way of creating awareness of father's involvement in language development of the pre-primary children as well as providing a system to support positive changes in father's behavior. Parenting sessions at the school level on Fathers' Role in language development of the pr-primary children can be offered where fathers and mothers both will attend.

Key Words: *Pre-primary, Language, ECD (Early Childhood Development), Fathers' Perception, quality.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Fathering practices have changed significantly over the past two decades in order to adapt to the changing economic, social, and cultural needs. Relative to a few decades ago, In addition, attitudes towards gender roles and expectations have also evolved over the years, in turn allowing fathers to play a more active role as caregiver. While fathers continue to be one of the main sources of financial support, they also play a key role in the development of children by promoting their identity, cultural values, safety, social-emotional competence, and also language development. Looking at fatherhood across time and cultural settings is important as it broadens our understanding of the changing role of fathers, and contributing factors to their

different level of engagement within the family. During the first years of life, children undergo major developmental changes across a range of domains. In particular, the entry into “formal language” is one of the most heralded achievements of early development. Language enables children to share meanings with others, and to participate in cultural learning in unprecedented ways [3]. Fathers’ role in the early childhood years is associated with positive child developmental and psychological outcomes over time; although most studies do not differentiate the benefits of having 2 parents from a specifically male presence as the second parent [15]. Research into the factors that promote positive language growth and learning in young children is central to addressing achievement gaps that exist in children from different ethnic, language, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Children enter school with different levels of skill, and these initial differences often affect children’s subsequent language growth, cognitive development, literacy and academic achievement [19]. Father’s perception and role for language development in various ways, but typically refer to five areas: health and physical development; social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language development and communication; and cognition and knowledge.

II. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY:

Children’s intellectual ability was determined using Raven’s Coloured Progressive Matrices, language competence using the Lestvice splošnega govornega razvoja–LJ (Scales of General Language Development). The results indicate that children’s intellectual ability and language competence have high predictive value for the school readiness because they explain 51% of the variance in children’s scores on the Preizkus pripravljenosti za šolo. Bangladesh Society in Dhaka city is known to be male dominated where, at present and in the recent past, society has been particularly and men have enjoyed a relatively higher status compared to women. Hierarchies and segregation in roles and status have conditioned men to regard issues relating to childbearing and rearing as an exclusive female domain. “Father” is just one of the many role identities that a man assumes as part of his “self”, placed in a hierarchy of identity dimensions based on salience and centrality [2]. Traditionally in Dhaka city, father is not directly involved in the daily cares of their children and do not contribute substantially to their children’s growth and language development. There may be a huge potential in the improvement of Bangladeshi fathers’ involvement and their roles in Language Development of the children. Fathers’ Perception and Role in promoting optimal learning situation and assisting Language Development of their Pre-primary Children is highly valuable and needs to be urgently highlighted. As already it is stated that very little remarkable study could be found in the context of Bangladesh in Fathers’ perception and role in Language Development of the Pre-primary Children’s of Urban Area: so this study could be a justified study on evidence of Fathers’ perception and role in Language Development of the Pre-primary Children’s of Urban Area. It also could be a background for a large scale study in the context of Bangladesh to gain understanding about children’s language development. Therefore, this study is designed to gain an in-depth understanding on Father’s perception and roles in children’s Language Development through in-depth interview of selected fathers and observation (home visit).

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this study is

- To know the perception of the fathers about the language development of their children.
- To know the fathers’ role in the language development of their children.

Research Questions:

- What is the understanding of the father about language development of their pre-primary aged children?
- What is the role of the fathers in the language development of their pre-primary aged children?

IV. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

It has been observed that fathers' use of conversation-eliciting speech relates to children's developing vocabulary skills at 24 months of age within a sample of low-income African American families.

Understanding that speech input varies among fathers, and specific strengths that fathers bring to interactions with their young children can help speech-language pathologists develop and implement more effective interventions[7].

Fathers' education and income were uniquely associated with child measures, and fathers' education consistently predicted the quality of mother-child engagements. Findings suggest direct and indirect effects of fathering on child development [9]. Fathers have seldom been the focus of research investigating the causes and correlates of early behavior problems. Two studies examined fathers of preschool boys with and without clinic-referred behavior problems. Six domains of risk were examined: life stress, social support, psychological symptoms, parenting attitudes, positive involvement, and harsh discipline [22].

The specific home literacy practices showed moderate to large correlations with each other, and only a few significant associations with the language and literacy outcomes, after controlling for maternal education, maternal reading skills, and the child's gender. The global measure of overall responsiveness and support of the home environment was the strongest predictor of children's language and early literacy skills and contributed over the specific literacy practice measures in predicting children's early language and literacy development [11]. Fathers contribute to their children's mental development more broadly than just with respect to language. They also influence their children's intellectual growth, adjustment to school, and behavior, as Catherine Tamis-LeMonda of New York University and her colleagues discovered. Further, children who are well-bonded and loved by involved fathers, tend to have less behavioral problems, and are somewhat inoculated against alcohol and drug abuse. Yet when fathers are less engaged, children are more likely to drop out of school earlier, and to exhibit more problems in behavior and substance abuse. Research indicates that fathers are as important as mothers in their respective roles as caregivers, protectors, financial supporters, and most importantly, models for social and emotional behavior. In fact, a relatively new structure that has emerged in our culture is the stay-at-home dad. This prototype is growing daily, thanks in part to women's strong financial gain, the recent recession, increase in corporate lay-offs, and men's emerging strong sense of self [17]. After controlling for family demographics, child characteristics, father's education and father's vocabulary during the picture-book task were related to more advanced language development at both 15 and 36 months of age [19].

V. METHODOLOGY

To achieve desired outcome samples from Uttara area in Dhaka city has been selected to conduct a qualitative study. For this research, the researcher has selected fathers from same socio-economic background who have pre-school going children. In a qualitative research it's very important to select research participants appropriately. Here the researcher has targeted 2 fathers, of children aged 03 to 05 years for data collection. Gender balance has been ensured by selecting, one father of 04 years and 06 months old boy and another father of 04 years and 06 months old girl. Non probability purposive sampling technique has been employed by the researcher in this study. Fathers who had willingness to participate were selected in the study. In this study, 02 fathers were selected for in-depth interview and observations. The following table represents sampling technique and characteristics of the study.

Table 1: Sampling Technique and characteristics of the study

Method	Sampled population	Number of sample
Interview	Fathers	2
Observation	Home	2

(1)Only working fathers, (2) Upper middle socio-economic class parents, (3) Have willingness to participate in the study voluntarily, (4) Refused or who chose not to give informed consent, (5)Who did not match in the working group and location.

VI. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

- Observations and interviews have been used to conduct the study.

Observation: Researcher himself directly observed the father-child interaction in home setting. In this study two observations have been done in two homes for 03 hours following observation checklist/guidelines.

- Observations time: Continuous 3hours per Home.

The table below presents information about the Particulars of observation

Table 2: Particulars of observation

Particular	Location	Number of children
Boys homes	Uttara, Dhaka	02
Girls homes	Uttara, Dhaka	02

- In-depth Interviews: To get information from different perspectives, two interviews were conducted in the home. In-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher himself separately with fathers to draw out each person's account of their beliefs and expectations. Before conducting the interview, the researcher explained the objectives of the study and explained confidentiality policy. Same interview questionnaire was designed for both the fathers. The researcher started the interview after building rapport with the respondents. The researcher also informed the respondents that their opinions were important and their contributions were appreciated.
- Interview time: one hour per interview.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

It has been an ongoing process that started as soon as I entered the field and continued till the final report is written. For data analysis, all data has been processed manually and analyzed in a descriptive way. It has been analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques. Analysis began by organizing the data according to themes. After observations and interviews the researcher organized and categorized the gathered information. All data was copied accordingly and the support copy was stored in a secure place. All notes and interview transcripts were dated and sequenced. All field notes and transcripts were read and reread. The transcriptions were then coded independently by the researcher. After coding the transcripts, the data was categorized; coded and major themes were identified by the researcher simultaneously. Finally, the data was interpreted and presented. The researcher utilized five steps analysis models for data analysis. The steps are given below.

- Data managing or organizing the data
- Reading and memoing
- Describing the context and participants
- Classifying or categorizing, coding and grouping them into themes
- Interpreting (Gay & Airasian as cited in O'Reilly, T, and M. 2008).

VIII. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

There is no universal way of presenting qualitative data as each qualitative study is unique [16]. Approximately six working days in July and August, 2017 were employed for data collection. Data was sorted out manually by various issues and analyzed thematically. The study involved a great deal of analysis that aims to provide a holistic picture. The participants of this study were selected from urban area of Dhaka city. All of the interview transcripts were made by the researcher. Some themes were generated from the data. In the result chapter, the researcher has identified some similarities and differences between the two homes. The table below presents an overview of the participants

Table: 3. Participant's Overview

Sl.	Interview	Age group(years)	Fathers	Children
1.	Interview	30-35	02	00
2.	Observation	30-35 and 04-05	02	02

The table below shows the data collection process

Table: 4. Research methods in relation to objectives

Sl.	Objectives	Techniques	Participants
1.	To know the perception of the fathers about the language development of their children.	Interview	fathers
2.	To know the fathers' role in the language development of their children.	Observation	Fathers and children

The study was undertaken with the specific objectives to find out the Father's perception and role about children's language development facilities that the father's are involving. According to father's opinion, fathers have positive attitude about language development but they have lack of proper knowledge regarding this. Data indicated that fathers possess some knowledge regarding showing positive behavior. Fathers need to be more aware of their children's language development area. They have limited

knowledge about their role. Fathers want to spend time with their children, but they do not have much time due to their business. Fathers positively acknowledged that children's study is being taken care of by the children's mother and she spends additional free time also with the children. The researcher has observed the daily activities at both homes that the fathers need to be more aware of buying story books for their children which is related to language development area. The researcher observed that children interact with fathers normally. But most of the time fathers do not interact with children. Children greeted the researcher with Salam with the help of the father. Fathers usually like to spend time in his own activities, like using mobile phone, talking with researcher and other household works. Most of the time children spent their time alone. Sometimes they were busy with their siblings either in playing or in quarrelling. It has been found that children's language has developed without any significant contribution of the fathers. Fathers didn't put any effort to increase the language development skills. Children were seen enjoying computer games, music, etc. on their own. It was found from home observation that children didn't interact with fathers most of the time. Fathers also didn't interact properly with their children. Even when the fathers are at home, normally they don't take any initiatives in their children's proper language development activities. Children were seen enjoying watching television. But they didn't participate in any kind of verbal interaction. They only participated in different kinds of games on their own. This chapter has presented the findings from the study. The analysis of data tried to reveal current situation of father's perception and role in children's language development activities. This chapter also tried to tie up a connection between perception and role. It brought out the quality dimensions from the fathers' perspective.

IX. DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to explore father's perception about language development of pre-primary children and what is the role of father regarding language development of the pre-primary children of urban area in Dhaka city. An important aim of this study was to gain insights into the father's perception. This is important because these factors are closely associated with the overall development of a child. The following is a discussion based on the findings. These findings aim to give a holistic picture of this study. The researcher has analyzed and compared the father's perception and role in language development of the pre-primary children in urban area in this chapter in view of the reviewed literature, research evidences and own experiences in this field. The present study demonstrates similar socio-demographic characteristics in both the fathers. Both are working fathers and work for long hours. Both fathers are involved in Govt. service. In general, fathers do not have adequate idea about language development of pre-primary children.

Further, the study was undertaken with the specific objectives to find out the father's perception about children's language development and how much they are contributing to it. Data indicated that fathers possess some knowledge regarding showing positive behavior. One father said, "I practice these from the beginning. No matter if the child is doing something wrong, I have to try to correct and tell her that it is wrong, don't do this. But it is not proper to give her punishment." Fathers told that they love the children. Fathers do not give any physical or mental punishment to their children. Fathers mentioned that they teach them about norms and manners, good behavior etc. They also assist them in playing. Fathers need to be more aware of their children's language development area. They have limited knowledge about their role. One of the fathers said, "I always speak in Bangla with my kids. My child knows some English, goes to school and learning English. So, I always speak in Bangla with him." (Interview#02, 29/07/2017). On the contrary, some weaknesses were found in the same home. The space for gross motor activities is related to language development area is not sufficient for the children. In this case, father should have arranged more indoor space facility and enough light so that children can run and play freely. However, fathers should arrange more stimulating, age appropriate learning activities and relevant materials for the children. They collect toys from local market and abroad which has created exploratory learning environment for the children. Children play computer operated game, watch television and ride tri-cycle on their own. Sometimes children play in collaboration with their younger sister/brother. Fathers want to spend time with their children, but they do not have much time due to their business. Fathers described their time schedule during their interview session. One father said, "Maximum 2-3 hour per day I can give to my kids".

The data obtained from observation in both the houses revealed that the fathers need to be more aware of buying story books for their children which is related to language development area. One of the fathers said, "My kids are too young to be able to read any story books, so I do not buy any story books for my kids." On

the contrary, fathers hesitated to share their perceptions clearly regarding the language development of their child.

The researcher observed that children interact with fathers normally. But most of the time fathers do not interact with children. Children greeted the researcher with Salam with the help of the father. Children also learn to respect the norms and values of our culture. Father did not tell stories, rhymes, play and dance with the children. One of the fathers could not give clear idea about the learning activities regarding language development area. Researcher also observed that fathers usually like to spend time in his own activities, like using mobile phone, and other household work. It has been found that children's language has developed without any significant contribution of the fathers. Fathers didn't put any effort to enhance the language development skills. Children were seen enjoying computer games, music, etc. on their own. It seems that children are getting less time for their stimulating activities. It was found from home observation that children don't interact with fathers most of the time. Fathers as well don't interact properly with their children. Even when the fathers are at home, normally they don't take any initiatives in their children's proper language development activities. It was noticeable that fathers did not give any punishment to their children. Children were seen enjoying watching television. But they didn't participate in any kind of verbal interaction. They only participated in different kinds of games on their own. All homes are a place of early care and development. Children get age appropriate, stimulating and variety of learning materials. In a home children can play, learn, talk, laugh, share their things and feelings. Besides, they are in safe environment and fathers also feel well. Adequate play and learning materials were available for each child to explore experience and learn in both the houses. Regarding the area of age appropriate literacy for the children, the fathers failed to guide children to instil good practice in language development area. The researcher also observed that the fathers were not well involved on language development activities (Observation note#1, 29.07.2017). Both the fathers have mentioned some limitations of children's language development area. But the view of two fathers about the limitation of children's language development area is a bit different. Fathers mentioned time constraint as the major limitation from their part in the children's language development area. They shared that now their work duration is 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. they return home at about 7.00 p.m. so they have not much time to spend with their child. Both fathers shared that, children follow their instruction and want to interact with them. They also told the researcher that the children are always happy with their activities performed at home. The researcher also observed that the fathers other responsibilities affect children's play and rhymes activities at home. The findings of the research from father's interview and observations showed that fathers have some ideas about children's language development area. They have some limitation also, like shortage of toys, story books, picture books etc.

By embarking on this study the researcher came to the realization that the father's perception and role are difficult to measure. This difficulty is associated with father's education and socio-economic status as well as lack of awareness. Yet, the work is considered to be important because of its potential to spark more debate and initiatives into the fathers' concern towards children's language development area. These findings are important as they present the partial picture of father's knowledge of ECD (Early Childhood Development) in Bangladesh. The researcher also attempted to draw a link between the father's perception and the existing role. From the overall discussion, it can be concluded that the fathers have limited knowledge and unconstructive but positive attitude towards pre-primary children's language development area. The factors and quality dimensions discussed above contribute to a positive betterment of the pre-primary children's language development area.

X. CONCLUSION

Child safety and an enriched environment for age appropriate development are the biggest concern for all working fathers. Focusing on language development in early years is essential because child's brain development and language acquisition occur at a rapid rate during these years. Fathers are the most proximal individuals who practices scaffolding for developing language and communication skills in children. This research provided information about father's perception and role in language development of the pre-primary children of urban area. In this research, fathers' education level and socio-economic status made an impact on the study findings. However, we can say that father's characteristics and belief are leading key factors that help to improve child's language development.

This research will contribute to knowledge and understanding in a small scale. This is only the beginning and probably will lead to further research in this field. The findings can be helpful for different stakeholders, researchers, policy makers to study in a larger scale in future to get a more significant outcome. However, the study revealed some shortcomings in the present scenario, such as, lack of proper knowledge and attitude of the father about pre-primary children's language development, insufficient activities to address children's language development, lack of proper intonation to the child, busyness of father. In spite of all these limitations, fathers are thinking positively to get involved in the children's language development process.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, following recommendations can be made

- This study recommends that the government of Bangladesh, INGO's (International Non Government Organization) & NGO's (Non Government Organization) should give emphasis on basic language development area in pre-school children by involving the fathers who have one or more preschool children.
- The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education should also identify the most effective way of creating awareness of father's involvement in language development of the pre-primary children as well as providing a system to support positive changes in father's behavior.
- Parenting sessions at the school level on Fathers' Role in language development of the pr-primary children can be offered where fathers and mothers both will attend.
- A nationwide study with a large number of samples can be conducted to explore this field in order to obtain more authentic findings.
- Moreover, further studies can be carried out to know the current situation and practices of father's perception and role in language development of the pre-primary aged children. More researches can be done to know the real situation of Bangladesh.

XII. REFERENCES

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