THE ROLE OF FAMILY TO ENLARGE AN INFANT’S CAPACITY IN COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Linguistics and communication development in infant can best be understood by tracing the forms and patterns of interaction between a child and other family members especially his/her parents. Father and mother are significant others for a child in developing communication and linguistic capacities. From interview with and observation on families in Poh Roboh, Condong Catur, Sleman Yogyakarta, Indonesia, this research found that the position of parents in the family is important not only for making the relationship better, but also for increasing children’s preparedness for entering the society. Children’s capacities and capabilities in communication make them emotionally better. There are three important positions of family in developing a child’s communication. First, parents can increase the capacities and capabilities in semantics, syntactics and pragmatics. These are linguistic dimensions that underlie child’s communication capabilities. Second, parents can be
BACKGROUND

For the family, the birth of a baby may have multifaceted meaning. It can be perceived as the blessing from God, or a form of happiness for his parents either from sociological or psychological aspect. Psychologically, the birth can be seen as an expression of love and essence of marriage of the parents, which intensifies the family happiness and emotional maturity as well as responsibility. Responsibility covers many things including education, health, social and economic welfare. It also leads to several implications for culture, habit, and spiritualism. From sociological perspective, the birth means the growth of family. The family changes into a situation where its composition and structure performed completely. In this context, parents usually observe not only the hereditary aspects of their children but also their intellectual development. They identified everything including whether the baby has similarities with, or differences from the parents. They will be proud of the baby’s similarities and the progress achieved.

Family is the first place where a child learns and interacts with other members. Here, a child learns to identify him/herself and personality. Family has significant role in developing the self and identity. According to Charles Horton Cooley (in Obrien, 2001) the way one looks at oneself is defined by the others. In other words, one’s self and personality is defined by one’s interactions with especially parents and other family members.

Communication plays an important role to increase the capacitities and capabilities of a child to interact with others. Through communication, a child can be taught about any aspect of life, such as reality, fact, opinion, and so on. Interaction between a child and his parents is important when the parents attempt to nurture the child’s identity and personality. The reality that exists in the society is a new thing that s/he needs to learn. Therefore, personal and social identity develop in the family by means of interaction with the parents and other members of family.

There is no way to obtain any goal without interaction and there is no interaction without communication. Without communication self and identity cannot be formed since nothing is known in life. One will not know the way to eat, read, speak, walk, persuade, induce and so on. All these, according to Mulyana (2007:4), must be socially learned.

This research focuses on aspects of communication and languages. The unit of analysis is family with a child under five years old in Poh Ruboh Condong Catur Sleman Yogyakarta. Each family has specific characteristics that encompass types of attitude and kinds of conduct. The relation among family members provides uniqueness in guiding a child in developing his/her communication capacity. However, not all parents can fully accompany their child everyday, they trust a nanny or their relative to do it. Two possible situations are first, both parents devote their time for working; second, the wife might stay at home doing all household chores as well as taking care of her child. The first situation brings in two choices. While both parents is at work, a nanny is handling all domestics tasks. The other is that a nanny is accompanied by a member of relatives. Consequently, the child develops his/her communication capacity and capability in different ways. It can be seen through the use of vocabulary, idiom, other language elements in every day life activity.
The research attempts to identify ways and directions of how family members contribute or enhance the development of a child’s communication and languages. The semantic dimension is useful to relate the use of symbols and signs to the object and meaning. Another aspect of language can be identified from the syntax that is useful to relate between symbols and symbols or signs and signs. It is amazing to know how a child understand and use so many symbols and signs available in everyday life. It is not merely about meaning, but it is also about how a child understand that if s/he uses symbols and signs, it has implication for an action or act.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Considering the above proposition, this research focuses on the role of family to enhance child’s communication capabilities and capacities in social life. It assumes that family has central position in enhancing communication capabilities and capacities in child. Based on this assumption, the problem statement of this research was: How does family play its role in enhancing communication development in infant at Poh Roboh, Sleman, Yogyakarta in Indonesia?

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

This research was developed on the theory of Symbolic Interaction proposed by George Herbert Mead (1962) and Herbert Blumer (1969). This theory assumes that self defined as the way of looking ourself is actually formed by interaction (Martin, 1958). The premises explain that self, identity and society are product of interaction. So, we can say that self was created and constructed by interaction. In this view human being is an important actor that influences the reality. The structure of reality is not a determinant for human being but is created. According this theory, reality and social structure were formed by social actors who interact with each other. Thus, join action defines the nuances of reality, and through a such interaction are created social norms, values, status, role, motives, attitudes, traditions, and even organizations. In short, the premises explain us that interaction define the social reality.

Although interaction seems to be the most important, it will be useless unless it has meaning. Therefore, any kind of interaction requires a shared symbol system. According to Katherine Miller (2002:51), coordination of an act could not take place when a different symbol system is used. Mead has identified two levels of interaction, i.e., first, what Mead calls as the conversation of gestures and second, the use of significant symbols (Blumer, 1969:8). Mead stresses that symbolic interactions appear while gestures is conveyed and how communicant responds to the gestures. According to Mead, gestures is an act dimension that indicates the pattern of behavior such as asking, giving command, pointing, declaring, and so on.

On the family context, parents are usually perceived as persons who know a thing more than a child does. Parents will, automatically, have bigger influence on a child in shaping his/her self and identity. The self will develop through involvement with family members. A child will learn from experiences being with his/her parents, siblings, grandfather and grandmother. Each contributes in shaping the child’s concept of self. According to Littlejohn and Domenici (2007:28), in addition to learning about meaning and new thing, a child also experiences and conceives a thing in relation to the situation s/he is in.

Thus, the progress of self is determined by the process involving shared symbol system. The self, in turn, changes an individual to be a social actor who will transform the relations into realities that was accomplished. It will give uniqueness and characters to a person who is doing an action. Mead (1962:158) argues that the progress includes two stages. First, the self is constructed by organizing proper attitudes via interactions with others. Second, the self, as a whole, is also constructed by several groups in society where a child can learn at all levels of group.

Cooley (1983:182) stressed that social origins of self derived from social exchange to the others.
There is no I without correlation with others: you, she, he, or they. Man may do everything, travel anywhere, and experience all things, but the world was not consisted of one man. It was defined by interaction, cooperation, and joint action. For Gadamer (1975:372) and Cooley illustrated self as looking glass self. Self can be seen as manifestation from others presentation. According Cooley, self can be seen through three aspects: performance of self, self image and feeling of self image.

What we explained about the theoretical foundations in this research, aimed to show that the development of infancy communication capabilities contain several dimensions. First, capabilities of a child identify the relation signs to objects. Second, ability to create and use system symbols. Third, ability of a child stated his feeling and emotion by use of language in everyday of life. Theoretically, it focused to capacity and capability of child’s communication. Three dimensions that were mentioned above illustrated it comprehensively for a child uses and adapts situation that he has. Semantics, syntactic and pragmatics were important part and sub-part in linguistics system. All symbols were used to construct reality. Parents keep an important role to enlarge the child’s capacity in communication.

Consequently, because language was also social product, capabilities and capacities of a child express his feeling and emotion must be done in social relations and interactions. Maturity of a child in communication was depended on social relations and interactions. In other words, interaction was a determinant for a child in developing his capacities of language and communications. By this position, family especially parents have the most important role in shaping self and identity of a child that will determine the capacity and capability of language and communication.

According Sullivan (1991) and Allport (in Rakhat, 1994), there are phases that will surpass for a child so he can conceive reality independently. Sullivan argued that when infancy phase was going on, a child will extend the usage of system symbols to express his feelings, emotions and needs. For Allport, the first three years of the birth, the progress of the children can be observed three of dimensions: sense of bodily self, self continuing self identity and self esteem pride.

But however and whatever will happen to a child, Ashley Montage argued that factor of communication will make a child mature. Communication will increase the dimensions of humanity, intellectual and social of life (Rakhmat, 1994:2). Bower and Bradacs (1982) argued that we can’t not communicate. We can avoid communication. Scientists like Elliot, Vigotsky, Jean Piaget and Buhler also argued that even a child was still very young and lack of experience, but he has indicated the capability of communication. It covers three of phases: primordial, proto-conversation and conversation (David, 1962:164)

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Symbolic interactions can be categorized into one of qualitative research tradition in communication fields. Even we know that symbolic interactions can be seen from two perspectives: Chicago School and Ioawa School. Chicago School stressed to qualitative research but Iowa School developed quantitative research (Littlejohn, 2002). Specifically, this research applied qualitative research proposed by Blumer in Chicago School Perspective. According Blumer (in Mulyana, 2003:149), this method emphasize the insightfull and feel to what subject feel. In doing so, a researcher approach the subject (known) closer and deeper.

Blumer developed this method by pointing out several techniques in gathering of data instances observation, interviews, life history, participant observations, diary, documents and so on. These steps were treated to get the highly quality of data. Whoever involved in this method, they must be finding individuals who participate at any kind of interactions. The most important is to get a meaningful data, a researcher need exploring and investigating the sphere of life toward some social interactions. At the same time, a researcher should
ensure the patterns of interaction and define the
meaning.

First, a researcher identify closer and
comprehensively to sphere of life of subject. Second, a researcher develop and sharpen the
research problem so directions, data and analytic
relations as well as interpretation can uncover the
real and substantial of facts. Thus, based on these
stage, this research was accomplished. This research
place family that has a child who was an under 5
years old as a unit of analysis. Gathering data was
done by interviews and observations towards a
variety of family at Poh Roboh, Condong Catur
Sleman District Province of Yogyakarta Indonesia.

Substance of this research was an interaction.
Capabilities and capacities of a child to express and
communicate by using a language was constructed
and produced within the processes of interaction.
The quality of interactions among member of
family influence the quality the achievement of
a child who will use of language and any kinds of
communications.

Shortly, some of strategies were implemented
here to gather of data. We took several times for
interviews to the parents, observe a child at any
different condisitons, housewife, relatives of family
and other sources that support this investigations.
We took several a notes for instropection and
restropection, and evaluate these data to take
identification and classification. We crossed data
one another before we took conclusion. Each
phase of investigation was needed verifications.
These process captured several steps (Miles and
Huberman, 1994): Data gathering, Data reduction,
Data Display, Conclusion and Verifying.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH: DISCUSSION AND
INTERPRETATION

Basically, form or kind of child’s
communication was actually social learning that
include all types of communications either verbal
or non-verbal communications during a definitely
period. It covered any kind of dimensions in
linguistics, for instances social ties, psychological
cues, sense of culture, values, beliefs, social
norms and religiosity that living in society. All
of elements shape to the progress of a child’s
communication, direct or indirectly.

There are several aspects that it can be noticed
within interaction between a child and adult as
awhole especially to their parents in shaping the
capability and capacity of children communication.
Processes that how children use a language in
everday of life was less or more defined by
interactions especially the parents position. It
was not merely syntactics matters for children in
expressing his feeling and social needs, but it was
also pragmatics matters that will be practiced in
social of life. Language activities itself can be seen
from any point of views: phonology, morfology,
grammatical and transformational of languages
into any kind of usage in society to show the social
dynamics processes. In order to make of sense,
a child need to motivate to express his feeling
openly without burden or limitation. Practices
and exercises will provide some information to
communication and languages acceleration. In this
landscape parents always prevent, protect, support,
correct, clarify, and keep in doing to enlarge and
qualify the child’s capacity.

Because a child under five years old was still
very young or infancy phase that has a limitation
experience either strategy or knowledge, so a
child needs others to develop his own capacities
and capabilities. Here, the parents occupy central
position for a child who can be seen from several
direction of the progresses. Of course, significant
influence was not merely deriving from parents.
It only stressed that parents have central position
and central role that was not compared with other
persons. But, it does not mean that others beside
the parents has no influence to children. All kind
of influences to children depend to the quality of
interaction among them and children.

How much and deep does a child undestand
concepts and social objects surrounding him? Over
this question, we argued that quality of interaction
defined by the results for children that shape him
understanding all things in his own of life. Each of
us take contributions in shaping and maturing a child to enter to society. Through differences that a child feel, in turn, he will understand several situations that he has. Later, a child can define social situation properly.

By identifying social objects differently, it has affected the progress of language capabilities of a child. A child will develop vocabularies and the usage of vocabularies from simple expression for examples playing, eating, sleeping, singing, walking, reading to complex expressions that combine the elements of language to get interests done well. It was useful for children as pre phase when children to enter the community at large.

This phase, we can see that children began to get a trust to others so they may communicate one another. Social maturity and psychological maturity started from here. When parent failed and ignored to the development of children, it usually happened several hindrances toward children to progress. In fact, based on these finding through investigation, we found that parents’ contribution to enlarge the capacity of children to communicate to others, prevailed via any kind of ways.

THE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND A CHILD

Relationship between a child and parents indicated uniqueness. Commonly, parents noticed their own children as a pair of relations that need highly serious and attentions. They assumed to accompany closely to their children so a child can conceive the reality independently. These phenomena can be articulated as a way of expression and responsibility of parents toward children. Whoever as a parent wants his children growing up naturally in cycle of life.

As observed, these relations for children has two forms of meaning. First, it has a meaning as involvement. Second, it means dependency. The involvement is illustrating how children and parents going to participate together in some activities. Highly involvement between children and parents for example will help children having capacities and capabilities to express his feeling, emotions and needs by using a language. It should be done by parents to drive their children to participate at any kind of activities. Because highly activities and involvement, a child will learn any different of situation and then he successful define a situation and behave properly.

The advantages of highly involvement is to secure and maintain relationship with others especially with persons who was acknowledge well. It also open the possibility to enlarge the scope and context of relationship with the others even to the strangers. Of course, the main of social actor within this situation are members of family. They are a person who contribute very significant to develop and shape a child to understand the reality from simple reality to complex reality.

The most important thing that can be expressed here is involvement that can be functioned as a comfortable feeling and peaceful situation for children. There is a tend when a stranger to talk, a child avoids interaction or unless a child tends to limit the interactions. At any level of situations, maturity is one of important thing. Because, based on data that was obtained, we know that level of emotional of children was found differently. Level of anxiety, calmly, and actively of children pointed out that children interact differently. Each has a different level when they meet and interact with the strangers.

Factualy, involvement and dependency do complementary each other. Dependency created involvement. While involvement will help children to differentiate a person who was acknowledge or not. Therefore, identity and self of children was constructed by person who was acknowledge or significant others. Thus, children will learn any kind of social role differently. It can derive from the same persons or the different persons at the all.

Shortly, we can conclude that dependency and involvement can be said as factors that create a foundation to develop and increase the capacity and capability of children expressing his feeling, emotion and needs. It can also be said that
foundation within family to build a child’s identity and self was determined by highly involvement through interactions. It means that development of infancy communication inherently expand within self and identity development or vice versa.

Manifestation of these processes prevail gradually, smooth, interactive, continuity and dynamics. Over the time was passing away, what a child got, absorbed, and obtained, was not merely easy to identify. It took place because theses processes was not instantly appearing within external interaction. What knowledge absorbed and experience were different thing with the use of language in everyday of life. Stock of knowledge is different to implementation matter within real of life. That’s why, one of periode, we often withness the credible achievements that was demonstrated by a child. If we notice it accurately, we soon will know that these achievements was accomplished by long processes.

To depict this process for an example, Harold Shryok said:

"the mother will soon find that she and the babe can communicate even though it will be many months before the child can’t say a word. The babe understands her by her voice, by her being tense or relaxed and by her manner of handling. And soon she can understand the child, helpless babe that he is a cry when hungry than when sleepy and still different ones when comfortable, lonely or in pair" (Shryock, 1982:54)

Finally, result of this research pointed out that family as the whole especially parents have important positions in related to develop and shape a child’s communication competence. Highly involvement between parents and children can be reflected into two dimensions: usage of time and usage of the space.

On other word, quality of interaction between parents and children was articulated by usage of time and space. By this research, then we know that parents who contribute knowledge to children has three position in central: increase the vocabularies, as referent and as the figure. Although like that, role of parents to enlarge the communication capacity, pragmatically intertwined. One factor influences another factors. Thus, each component that was found here, depicted qualification that parents have provided the best opportunity for their children.

PARENTS AND VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT OF CHILDREN

Through observation and interviews found out some findings that depict expanding and increasing vocabularies that has achieved by a child. This achievement was resulted from involvement that take place between parents and a child. Some phases can be explained more in detail. This was accomplished through starting of spelling.

Parents drive their a child to imitate and try to spell one or two syllable of word. Then, they indicate a word to a meaning of word as well as the object. Kind of words frequently conveyed was commonly used by a child to express his feeling and needs. Some of words that was usually used for an example mama. In our culture, a word of mama can be enlarge to some meanings. Mama can be ameliorated to maem and mam. In other cases, parents usually point to some object that relate to body. Some of terms like nose, ears, eyes, hand, legs, stomach and etc. To develop emotion, they point to simple emotion expression like crying, smiling, angry, laughing, sad, respect to others, greeting, and so on. These methods encourage children to identify several vocabularies in line to basic expression. Children begin to learn spelling, listening, and try to express it to others.

This process emphasize imitation where a child follow what parents spelling a word. Theoretical perspectives, a way parents teach their children must influence the first meaning that can be developed inside a child. In early phase, children usually master verbs and nouns. These verbs and nouns related to simple activities that take place between children and member of family. Use of language for complex purposes never still happen.

This research also found out that each phase that was achieved by a child, parents observe this
progress time by time. While parents know that their child has made progress in language, they tend to enforce by driving their children to repeat and repeat what a word that he was identified well. Parents role here is to concretize a word by relating object and meaning. They enlarge and expand these words by using narration, story, analogy and conversation.

Gradually, these processes made progress for a child of communication competence and its own ability. These processes was not merely expanding and increasing especially mastering a word, verbs, and nouns, but it was also raising communication capacities to express his needs. Parents was sometimes surprising when they find their a child speaking a thing and relating a word to another word into sentences. It seems happening abruptly but in the fact, it could happen because it took long time in process. In memory system within a child, it is useful when child’s intellectual was also developing.

Type of sentence that was successful created was still simple consisting of two components. For examples: What is this? Who is he? These types of sentences look like simple but it affect to enlarge the landscape of vocabularies. Word what or who is a word that was used to design to point to all of nouns and adjectives even all vocabularies in language. This process prevail intensively and natural even most of parents feel unconsciousness that involvement between parents and children enrich vocabularies of children. This relation affected else dimensions to enrich vocabularies including culture, social norms, beliefs and attitudes.

Research also identified development of infancy communications covering three aspects. First, a child know symbols, signs, words, sounds of symbols. Within this phase, a child can implement it within everyday of life. Second, a child can mention, structure and construct the sentence in more complex. Coherence, structure, and cohesion of word were more interesting when we observe it done by children. Third, gradually, a child can express his emotion, feeling, motives and needs. At any kind of interactions, meaning can be multifaceted either implicit or explicitly.

THE PARENT AS FIGURE

The second position of parents in developing of infancy communication was perceiving as model. Definition of model in this context pointed to a child ability to spell a definitely word and construct a sentence. This ability was absorbed through interaction to the others including parents as the significant others. This is a model of social learning in which parents as figure and centrum of imitations. Parents was centrum of attention and awareness of children to understand social reality that he has.

Relationships was created between parents and children. On one side, a child conceived this relationship as result of involvement and dependency, on other side, parents perceived a child as young social human. They engage to a child because psychological, biological and religious traits. Thus, relationship between parents and children was created on a strong emotion and psychological fondations.

The findings also disclose that amount of a child’s vocabularies has equal correlation with frequency of habitual in which was accomplished by parents. This process frequently ignored. For a long term of period, actually a child learn everything in everyday of life from his parents. What parents did, spoke, talk, acted, a child perceived it accurately. Children recorded it in their own memory. They deposit knowledge consisted of norms, values, beliefs, culture, ethics, and esthetics. They will retrieve, save and forget a thing depending the degree of their own needs.

The advantages of conversation between parents and children can be felt while a child implement it to conversation including all practices of communication in everyday of life. This conversation gave children memory that was useful to identify the implementation of language. At any level of relationships, parents as model clearly enforced the function of relations. Self of children
can develop because the pattern of relation that prevail in everyday of life. It prevail very smooth and subtle. Relation between I and You was more created existence of parents and a child. A part from this relation was constructed by the others, this was conrtucted earlier within a family specially role of parents. Thus, whoever or whatever, we can’t deny if the role of family in enhancing the communication development for children was absolutely concrete.

These findings also told us that the way individuals conceive who he was, less or more was define the way others see him. These arguments was in line to Cooley proposition. Parents as model was actually reflecting a child behave. Within it, communication was very essential.

THE PARENTS AS REFERENT

There are several dimensions available between parents as model and parents as referent. As mentioned above, parents as model pointed out that children imitate the pattern of behavior that parents did. What parents did, talked, spoke and behave can be model for children in developing capacity and capability of communication in everyday of life. On the contrary, parents as referent has different meaning for children.

Verified and examination dimensions was usually used to determine position the parents as referent. A child who was still developing into maturity has many problems that must be solved. He was frequently knowing nothing. He was constantly confusing when they have many different of situations so he was possible wrong doing that mislead directions. At these moments, a child must seek someone that can help to reduce uncertainty and anxiety. Therefore, this situation directed a child to seek a person that can handle and help the problems. While, after looking for someone, he find parents as person who belongs the proximity and highly involvement.

The parents as referent was useful to develop the ability of children communicating with others. This position was clearly enriching any type of capacity and capability of a child’s communication. Parents can neutralize, enrich, select, blame, and correct to what children did. At any level of situations, frequently a child has so many different situation and therefore he probably meet a new thing. Naturally a new thing, for children, was less knowing, right or wrong, polite or impolite. Here it is for parents as referent will contribute to manage uncertainty that children have. The parents as referent also justified type of behavior of children to be standarized. It was also function to support a child to do a thing independently.

CONCLUSION

These results clearly proved that interaction was very important in developing self and capability of a child’s communication. But in fact, awareness of the parents toward their children that interaction is very important was still low. Many of them still trusted their children to others. Frequency of interaction was still poor and unqualified.

At this point significant other and significant symbols are factor that lead dynamics of a child’s progress of communication. This article describe the main dimensions of family that direct the development of communication that found in result finding in this research.

By this study, we also know that succesful or unsuccessful in developing a child’s communication was closely connection to adaptation in which parents perform when they communicate. How do parents understood relationship between achild and parents, how do parents concieve involvement and dependent, how do parents reside as figure for their children. Beside these dimensions, It directly or indirectly has been giving attention to characteristic of children communication.

As a process in developing and increasing the capacities, three positions that was performed within the familiy can be functioned to correct, add, increase and repair the quality and the way children communicate in everyday of life. These
qualities also related to quality of interaction that will be affected some factors that existed in their environments.

REFERENCES


