

## THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN FACILITATING LANGUAGE EXPOSURE FOR A LEARNER'S SPEAKING ABILITY

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### **Abstract**

*This research aimed to discover the parental involvement from the mother in facilitating the language exposure to improve the learner's speaking ability. This research was a case study and applied the procedure from Yin to design steps of this research: planning, designing, collecting, analyzing, and sharing. The researcher interviewed the learner's mother using the interview guidelines and observed the daily activity. Therefore, the researcher discovered that using English in daily conversation, supporting the learner when using English during the daily conversation and teaching-learning process, using English during the teaching-learning process, providing media to support the learner, stimulating English to the learner, and assisting or monitoring the learner when using the media provided a good amount of language exposure for the learner to improve his speaking skill, especially his fluency and its function in transaction and interaction. These parental involvements worked in one unity like a chain reaction to build a language exposure that would expose the learner and improve the learner's speaking.*

**Keywords:** *Language Exposure, Parental Involvement, Speaking Ability*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking plays an essential role in language learning to transfer and receive knowledge orally. In improving speaking ability in a certain language, the learner is expected to get intense exposure to the target language or practice from their surroundings. As Chomsky (2009) argues that language learning is not really something that children do, it is something that happens to the children placed in an appropriate language-learning environment, where the child is affected by social interaction and cognitive development. Learners, who learn English, both as their second language or foreign language, are mostly affected by their social interaction. It provides a lot of language exposure where they use

the language most of the time to interact. The most significant exposure in acquiring English is in their home where they interact with the other English speakers (e.g. their mother or father who frequently used English in communicating with the learner) which stands as the social interaction that really close to their English-speaking exposure. The English-speaking exposure from the parents' creation helps the learners to improve their speaking ability.

The researcher came up with a case of a 9-year-old boy who learned English from a young age. He is a young learner who can be qualified as a good English speaker for his age. The learner learned English at the age of 4-year-old. His parents, especially his mother, introduced English starting from alphabet and numbers. However, since the amount of exposure to improve his speaking ability back then was quite lacking, his language ability was only around recognizing the alphabet and numbers and pronouncing simple greetings in English, such as good morning, good afternoon, good evening, and good night. His mother claimed that a similar thing happened in the daycare, he learned English only around the alphabet and numbers. Then, when he entered kindergarten, the teacher used English to greet and still teach the learner around the alphabet, numbers, and shapes. However, when the learner entered primary school, the majority of the teaching-learning process was using English because he joined a bilingual primary school. This was quite a significant change for the learner from his daycare and kindergarten because he did not have prior knowledge to engage himself in conversation in English most of the time before. His mother mentioned that the learner had difficulty keeping up at first because compare to the other students in his school, they already have a better prior knowledge of speaking. The parents of the other students also placed their children into English speaking exposure (e.g., English language course) before which made them developed speaking better before they joined the kindergarten. As a result, the mother said that the learner felt discouraged, unmotivated, and low self-confidence. However, in a year, the learner managed to keep up at the end of the semester in the first grade, because the learner's parents increased the amount of English speaking exposure on their own for the learner to improve the speaking ability.

Furthermore, the case above had intrigued the researcher to know parents' involvement in facilitating the language exposure for the learner's speaking ability. In the previous research, Kozhevnikova (2019) says that language exposure is one of the factors that determine successful language teaching and learning. If the language learners do not have enough exposure, it may slow down the progress of language learning. The absence of native speakers of the language around the learners to have an authentic communication to improve the language ability is another reason to create a language exposure like creating a language speech community or providing media exposure for the learners, so the learners will have the opportunity to be exposed by the targeted language.

The parental involvement is actually another major role in language learning for language learners especially their children. Since they know what their children needed, they will create an environment that suitable to support language learning. Their involvement also in the learner's language learning is beneficial for the outcomes. For example, Hurtado Torres and Casteñada-Peña (2016), explain the parents' and students' roles in EFL literacy learning in Columbia. The results of the research demonstrate that even when parents do not have a command of the English language, they still have the potential to help with

language learning from a non-linguistic point of view such as monitoring children's homework, providing good learning conditions for their children, shaping children's ideas and thoughts for EFL by giving advice, and feedback about their children's homework development. They emphasize that the parents are being actively involved in a student's EFL homework is a good parental involvement in children's EFL learning. Consequently, children may gain a lot of confidence about accomplishing tasks and obtain better EFL learning outcomes.

However, the parental involvement or roles in creating or facilitating a language exposure for their children's speaking ability have not been sufficiently explored. It is due to the fact that the majority of research on parental involvement has taken place in contexts where children do not typically learn a foreign language (Forey et. al., 2016). Even if the language learning does take place, it is learning English as a second language within an English-speaking environment, such as in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand. While in non-English speaking parts of the world, parents should create or facilitate language exposure in order to have the opportunity to improve their children's ability.

In this research, the researcher explored the roles of parents in facilitating language exposure for the learner to improve his speaking ability with the case study. This research explained specifically the set of parental involvement which the parents used in facilitating the language exposure during the early age of the learner learning English until the learner is well improved in terms of his speaking ability. Therefore, this research with a case study method would provide an in-depth explanation of parental involvement in facilitating language exposure for English speaking ability. The purpose of this study is to help people to be aware of the importance of parental involvement and speaking skill in language learning especially improving speaking ability. This research was conducted in the hope to help others in creating a language exposure to improve their speaking or other's speaking ability who they help in language learning, especially parents and teachers.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The researcher employed a case study to gain insight or in-depth explanation on parental involvement in facilitating the language exposure for the learner's speaking ability. In the case study, there are processes that are proposed by Yin (2018); it includes planning, designing, preparing, collecting, analyzing, and sharing. However, the researcher already created steps for this research that were modified from Yin's processes.

The first step from Yin's case study method is planning. In this step, the researcher identified the relevant case for doing a case study, compared with other research methods, and decide whether to do a case study or not with the data that the researcher discovered from the pre-observation and also the information of the learner's language learning history. This information encouraged the researcher to know the parent's involvement. The parental involvement was considerably better to be discovered with the case study because the researcher believed that it would give an in-depth explanation on parental involvement especially in creating or facilitating the language exposure for the learner until he could improve his speaking ability better. So there researcher would not discover

merely a set of parental involvement but also the specific explanation on each parental involvement.

The second step is designing. In this step, the researcher formulated the research question based on the case to guide the research. The researcher also designed the interview guidelines to gather the information based on the research questions that were already formulated by the researcher and also the parental involvement discovered by Poyraz (2017) and Forey et. al. (2016).

The third step is collecting. The researcher started to collect the data by interviewing and check the data that had been gathered from the interview with observation. The interview was a one-on-one interview since the source of the data was only one person and the researcher wanted to gain an in-depth explanation from the mother's perspective more. The interview questions were also semi-structured in order to explore more elaborated answers from the mother.

After gathering the data from the interview, the researcher checked the result with observation. The researcher wrote down the activity that the researcher observed in the field notes. This observation also aimed to discover any additional information that the researcher did not get from the interview.

The next step is analyzing. the researcher analyzed the set of actions of the parental involvement in language exposure that can influence the learner's speaking ability which was already gathered from the interview and observation. Therefore, the researcher discovered what kind of action that the parents do to support the language learning for their child, which consciously or unconsciously facilitate the language exposure to improve the learner's speaking ability.

Analyzing the interview data was by structuring narratives to describe the interview content and interpreting the data (Cohen, 2000). Then analyzing the field notes to gain the data from observation, the researcher was transcribing the field notes and interpreting the data from the field notes (Creswell, 2012)

The last step is sharing which in this last step the researcher concluded the data analysis and answered the research question of this case study based on the data analysis from the previous step. This thesis is the result of the sharing step from this research.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

To discover what is the action of parental involvement in facilitating language exposure for the learner's speaking ability, the learner's parent who is in charge of the learner's language learning, his mother, was interviewed. Then, the mother who already told the researcher about the action that she did to provide the language exposure for her son was observed to check the fact from her interview and to gather additional information, which is collected from the observation. The results are (1) using English in daily conversation, (2) supporting the learner when using English, (3) using English in the teaching-learning process, (4) providing media to support the learner, (5) stimulating English to the learner,

and (6) assisting or monitoring the learner when using the media. These actions create a language exposure that supports the learner to improve his speaking skill.

The first parental involvement that similar to what Poyraz (2017) and Forey et. al. (2016) discovered was using English for daily conversation. This action was done by the mother so the learner would be familiar with speaking English which also improve the learner's speaking ability. However, the mother did not force him to speak in English for the daily conversation frequently. She asked him to start speaking English from short phrases then gradually to the longer phrases. The intensity of using English during the early stage of learning English was not too intense but gradually increasing. It made the learner familiar to speak in English even to ask a few out of curiosity.

Therefore, the mother did not directly ask the learner to speak in English. The mother spoke with the learner in English gradually, which implicitly encourage the learner to use English for daily conversation to speak in English. The mother really had a principle to do something slowly from the small thing however continuously. This action was done continuously until it created a big improvement for the learner.

The second parental involvement that the researcher discovered was supporting the learner when using he speaks in English. There are a few different kinds of support from the mother that the researcher discovered from the interview, which not merely happened during speaking. First, motivating the learner to learn English, was to increase the interest in the language and to help the learner knowing the importance of learning English. Second, supporting the learner when he makes some mistakes in speaking. The mother helped the learner by giving feedback when the learner making grammar mistakes or mispronouncing a few words. Third, encouraging the learner to ask something when he did not understand something during conversing with his mother or he found some struggles in creating the sentence or suitable words to deliver which led to the confusion is also part of support from the learner's mother. Other than giving feedback only after the learner made a mistake, the learner's mother also gave some feedback to the learner to help the learner to have better fluency in conversing. This action was indeed claimed by the mother as one of the ways of her support for her child to speak in English and to encourage him so he was not afraid to make mistakes. The third action was rewarding the learner with something when he accomplished something. The reward was given to motivate the learner to accomplish something due to his low interest in a certain thing.

The third parental involvement was using English during the teaching-learning process. The learner studies in a bilingual private school, so the majority of the lessons in this school are in English. This led to the learner's mother using English in the teaching-learning process. The mother claimed that she used English to teach the lessons from school in English. This also created a language exposure for the learner in the teaching-learning environment, not only in the daily conversation. Apart from using English, during the teaching-learning, the encouragement to ask something in English when the learner did not understand and also stimulating the learner to keep using English also happened. So the previous actions were still being involved in the other circumstance by the learner's mother in order to create an English-speaking exposure for the learner in every aspect.

## Discussion

The result shows that parental involvement really built the right amount of language exposure that exposed the learner to the target foreign language, English. Some parental involvement from Poyraz (2017) and Forey et. al. (2016) such as using English in daily conversation, supporting the learner to improve the learner's speaking ability, using English in the teaching-learning process, and providing media are proven true from the research finding above. However, there were some additional actions, and also the researcher discovered few new things, such as stimulating English to the learner and assisting or monitoring the learner when he uses the media.

The researcher discovered that the first parental involvement from the mother in facilitating language exposure is stimulating English to the learner. This particular parental involvement started to build the learner's interest. The stimulation was exposing the learner to English from an early age by speaking in English from small things but continuously. After this stimulation, the other parental involvement would follow eventually, for example when the learner already had an interest in the language, it would be easy for the mother to encourage the learner to use English for daily conversation. This could create a suitable language exposure for the learners to improve his fluency.

Another parental involvement that was not in the parental involvement by Poyraz (2017) and Forey et. al. (2016) is assisting and monitoring the learner when the learner was using the media. The learner's mother still monitors the learner when he uses the media especially when he uses YouTube to find the content that he wants. She still monitors the learner by making sure the content is in English and suitable for the learner's age. The mother also still assists the learner by answering the learner's question when he feels confused or wants to know something about the contents from YouTube. Again, after having the language exposure from the content, the learner also gets exposure from the interaction between the learner and his mother. This supports the statement from Al Zoubi (2018) that says that language learners should be exposed to the English language through many types of media, such as movies, songs, and the internet on a daily basis to help them get rid of their points of weakness and improve their fluency as well as proficiency in English.

The researcher also discovered the kinds of support that the learner's mother provided for the learner in the language exposure. The supports were motivation, encouragement to ask something the learner does not understand, and encouragement when the learner makes a mistake. Sometimes, the learner's mother used the reward system as the kind of support for the learner. This was not explained by either Poyraz and Forey et. al. in their research.

Based on the elaboration in the previous paragraph, parental involvement worked like a chain reaction in facilitating language exposure. Even though there are a few parental involvements that change the way it worked a little bit due to the learner's improvement and age, however, it never changed the language exposure for the learner. The changes are only the intensity of the presence from the mother is doing the action due to time and the learner's capability to do a few things alone, along with the disappearance of some media due to the learner's interest and the learner's age that cannot be insisted to use the same media, like the flashcard. These parental involvements are also proved to give the

learner's a significant improvement which supporting the statement from Cole (2008) that says "children achieve higher language levels when they have access to more parental input and involvement." The language exposure that the researcher discovered also proved that there are positive relationships between language exposure and the development of the learner's ability, especially speaking ability. Because the more the learner involved in the language exposure that the learner's mother provides, the more he speaks in English This supports the statement from Al Zoubi (2018) that says "the higher the exposure, the better the learner performs in the target language."

The fourth was providing non-digital and digital media to improve the learner's speaking. The non-digital media, such as books and flashcards, was used to help the learner arranging his sentences to speak in English. This mostly happened during the early age of learning English. Then, there were YouTube, online games, songs, videos, and movies as the digital media to help the learner. During the early year of learning the language, the learner's mother used flashcards, songs, and videos to introduce a few simple things to help later on for his improvement especially the learner's speaking ability. YouTube, however, was a media that the learner's mother still provided for the learner until the present. When the learner was too young, the mother provided time and also English content for the learner to watch. However, now the learner is able to find the content that he wanted to watch, so his mother only provided time for the learner to watch the content.

After discovering the similarity of parental involvement from Poyraz (2017) and Forey et. al. (2016), the researcher also discovered two additional parental involvements from the observation and interview. There were stimulating the learner with English and assisting or monitoring the learner when he uses the media. Stimulating the learner with English happened during the first phase of learning English. This action was done by the mother to increase the learner's interest in English. Stimulating English to the learner by speaking in English starting from the simplest way was an action to introduce the language to the learner and indeed to increase the interest in the language. This action also exposed the learner to the language starting from knowing nothing about the language until feeling familiar with the language then leads the learner to speak the language. Even though, the stimulation of English was also done during the conversation between the two unconsciously by the mother. She kept using English while speaking when the learner still spoke in Bahasa, then the learner realized to speak in English. Therefore, the mother did not directly ask the learner to speak in English but by speaking in English first simultaneously.

The last parental involvement that the researcher discovered was assisting and monitoring the learner when he uses the media. When the learner was still young, the learner's mother was still needed to assist the learner, for example finding the content to learn and using flashcards to teach the language. As the learner grows older, the learner's mother only monitors the learner when uses the media. She could not assist or accompany the learner all the time. However, she still assisted the learner by answering any questions from the learner when he got confused or did not understand something.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusions**

This study attempted to investigate parental involvement in facilitating the language exposure for the learner's speaking ability on a 9-year-old foreign language learner.

Regarding the research finding, the researcher encapsulated the conclusion of the research that the parental involvements in facilitating the language exposure are (1) using English in daily conversation, (2) supporting the learner when using English, (3) using English in the teaching-learning process, (4) providing media to support the learner, (5) stimulating English to the learner, and (6) assisting or monitoring the learner when using the media. These parental involvements worked in one unity like a chain reaction to build a language exposure that would expose the learner and improve the learner speaking.

### **Suggestion**

There are some suggestions addressed to the teachers, the parents, and the other researchers. (1) to use this set of parental involvement to be their references in creating a language exposure for their students in a classroom or home. (2) to use this research result to collaborate between the teachers and the parents to help the learners getting language exposure from home. (3) to investigate a larger group of parents so there will be more variety of parental involvement to facilitate a language exposure to improve the learners' speaking ability or other language ability. In order to more fully understand parental involvement and language exposure, there is still much more work to be done in this area. Nonetheless, the researcher believes that this study raises important questions about the nature of parental involvement and the importance of language exposure at home in children's foreign language learning

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