

# Parent Involvement in Scaffolding a Child's English Language Functions

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## Abstract

This study deals with the parent involvement in scaffolding a child's language functions. The object of this study is a student of pre-school at *Mondial Education*. The goal of this study is to describe and explain what speech functions acquired by the child with the help of her parent. The research design of this study is descriptive qualitative and explanatory in nature. The data collection is conducted by recording the child's utterances. The data collected is analyzed and interpreted in the light of Second Language Acquisition theory. The findings of this study suggest that the child acquired a number of speech functions. The dialogues between the child, her mother and her grandfather are inherently interactive in the sense that they typically do not involve simply one move from one speaker. It is noted that after one speaker has initiated an exchange, another speaker is very likely responding. The commodity exchanged could be either information or goods and services. The roles associated with the exchange relations are either giving or demanding.

**Keywords:** scaffolding, language functions, utterances, interactive, exchange.

## Introduction

It is assumed that parents play a significant role in their children's academic development. There is a positive relationship between children's school success and their parents' involvement in their education. The effect of parent involvement on numerous areas of development has been examined and it is found that parent involvement is related to children's increased cognitive and emotional development, motivation, time spent doing homework and general students success. Additional evidence points to the positive relationship between parent involvement and student academic achievement. Children whose parents are involved in their education seem to do better across various developmental domains (Harper, 2010: 123)

This study aims at describing and explaining what language functions acquired by a preschool child with the help of her parent. Referring to Celce-Murcia et.al (1995), the knowledge of language functions is categorized to seven key areas, namely interpersonal exchange, information, opinions, feelings, suasion, problems and future scenarios. Preschoolers do most of their learning when they are playing. That is why so much time in preschool classrooms is devoted to free play. During this time, children build on what they already know and try out new skills and ideas within their zone of proximal development. For instance, a child might only be able to build a small tower out of two or three blocks, but during free play will work on building a larger tower out of five or six blocks at the suggestion and with the help of another student.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a term that psychologist Lev Vygotsky originated. It is the area between where a child can complete a task entirely on his own and the next task, which he can complete with some assistance. It is in that area where learning takes place. Eventually, he will master that next task so he can do it entirely on his own; and the area from the newly mastered task to the next becomes the new ZPD.

It is reasonable to assume that should parent's assistance to a child's learning in the zone of proximal development take place, he could do his task better entirely on his own. The parent involvement in turn would increase the child's cognitive and emotional development, motivation, time spent doing homework and general students success. Additionally, the student academic achievement would be improved with the parent involvement since children whose parents are involved in their education are found to do better across various developmental domains.

## Method of Research

The research design of this study is a Case Study. Denny in Nunan (1992: 77) argued that in a case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school, or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyze the intensity of the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which the unit belongs. This study an observation has been focused on the characteristics of an individual unit that is a preschool child to probe deeply and to analyze the intensity of the phenomenon with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population.

In collecting the data, the child's utterances were recorded and transcribed based on turn. The findings were then analyzed based on the category of language functions proposed by Celce-Murcia et. al (1995). Eventually the data were interpreted in the light of the Second Language Acquisition and other relevant theories.

## Research findings and discussion

The research findings suggest that through scaffolding the parent provided linguistic activities just slightly above the child's ability. The activities include language skills the child has already mastered as well as some new learning goals. The example below shows that with some assistance from the parent, and using those previously mastered skills, the child is able to perform the new linguistic activity and eventually build new linguistic skills as well.

The child learned how to say hello to somebody or welcome them and the act of making one person known to another, in which they tell each the other's name and to recognize somebody or something and be able to say who or what they are has been displayed by the child. Additionally, to say that you are willing to do something for somebody or give something to somebody has also been acquired by the child.

Apart from accepting an offer the child could also decline the invitation. Expressing and acknowledging gratitude is one of the aspects of knowledge of language functions in term of interpersonal exchange that the child also acquired.

Making engagements is one of the knowledge of language functions, particularly of its interpersonal exchange. In a learning experience where the child is supposed to play with blocks, utterances dealing with complementing and congratulating could be heard.

Showing surprise is not that easy to do for children. However, the child here made every effort to realize it despite limited vocabulary she has acquired. Showing empathy is not less crucial than that of showing surprise. However, the child succeeded to realize it. Sadness because something has not happened or been as good, successful, etc. as the children here expected or hoped had been shown in a learning experience which involves a mother to appreciate one's work.

Giving people information about something that you have heard, seen and done have also attracted the child here to make it. It includes saying what somebody or something is like and to tell a story. The example below shows how the child report, describe and narrate something. Having or keeping an image in your memory of an event, a person, a place from the past has also been the need of the child here to make it.

We should not underestimate children's ability of expressing their feelings or thoughts about something or somebody. The example below shows how the child here makes it happen. The child was involved in exchanging information.

To have the same opinion as somebody or to say that you have the same opinion have been the urgent need of the child here apart from her different opinion about it. The child here expressed it in such a way as it is shown in example below. The child here was involved in exchanging information.

To think that somebody or something is good, acceptable or suitable needs to be realized by the child in an expression. The child also needs to think that somebody or something is not good or suitable, to not approve of as it is shown in example below. The child here was involved in exchanging information and services.

The child is also eager to show the good feeling that she has when she has achieved something or when something that she wanted to happen do happen. In addition to such intention the child wanted to express a feeling that she is not pleased and satisfied.

The child also experienced the feeling of being slightly angry that she needs to express. Additionally, putting forward an idea or a plan for other people to think about has been acquired by the child in spite of simple expressions they make.

The action for asking for something formally and politely has also been demonstrated by the child in a learning experience. To tell somebody to do something especially in a formal or official way is not an exception for the child to express.

To say that you are annoyed, unhappy or not satisfied about somebody or something proves to be the necessity of the child in her communication. To think or to say that somebody or something is responsible to something bad or to say that somebody has done something wrong or is guilty of something is not that simple to realize. However, the child here has taken a risk to realize. To feel sorry about something you have done or about something that you have not been able to do is certainly not that simple. The child here, however, succeeded in realizing it.

The child here seems to have acquired how to say that she is sorry for doing something wrong or causing a problem despite her limitation in vocabulary. Expressing a desire of a feeling that you want to do something or have something and expressing a belief that something you want will happen as well as expressing a strong wish to have or do something requires high nature of imagination. The child has taken the risks of realizing it, too.

The child also managed to expressing something that she intend to do or achieve and expressing something that she hopes to achieve as well as expressing what she intends or plan to do. Additionally, the skill to tell somebody that they will definitely do or not do something or that something will definitely happen has been demonstrated by the child.

To say that something will happen in the future and to form an opinion about something without

knowing all the details or facts needs risk taking that the child find it relax to make it happen. In addition, the child also managed to discussing the fact that something might exist or happen, but is not certain to and discussing the ability or qualities necessary to do something.

**Example:**

Name: Aza

Date of birth: July 26, 2008)

(Three years old)

Teacher: Good morning, Aza

Aza : Good morning

Teacher: How are you?

Aza : I'm fine, thank you.

(Febr 23, 2013)

(Four years and 8 months)

Aza : Denpa (Grandpa), Can you buy me honey?

Grandpa: Honey? Is it something to drink?

Aza : Honey is not to drink, Denpa. Honey is to lick. Like baby.

Grandpa: Okay. It's sweet, isn't it?

Aza : Yes. Honey can make you strong.

Grandpa: Bees produce honey, don't they?

Aza : Yes. Bees and flowers.

(Febr 24, 2013)

Aza : Denpa. I want to ride bicycle. (Please, accompany me)

Grandpa: Mommy. (You can ask Mommy to accompany you)

Aza : Mami don't want to ride bicycle. (Mommy doesn't want to accompany my riding on bicycle).

(Febr 24, 2013, few hours later)

Aza : Den, where have you been? Why you don't ride bicycle with me?

Grandpa: Because I am tired and sleepy.

Aza : You have take a nap.

Grandpa: I tidy up everything, first. I had to take a bath, too. Why were you in a hurry?

Aza : Because I have to ride bicycle before already night.

Grandpa: Mommy joined you riding on bicycle, didn't she?

Aza : Yes. But Mommy ride motorcycle.

Grandpa: You wanted Mommy ride bicycle, too?

Aza : Yes. I have to ride faster. I am tired.

(Febr 24, 2013. Few hours later)

Aza : Denpa, why your tummy is big?

Grandpa: Because I eat too much.

Aza : It's like Ballon Denpa.

Grandpa: Baloon Denpa?

Aza : Yes, because your tummy is round.

(Monday, February 25, 2013) (It's about to leave for school)

Aza : Look, Denpa. I show something. (Showing her imaginative construction of blocks)

Grandpa: Wow. What is it?

Aza : It's a machine.

Grandpa: A machine?

Aza : Yes. Machine and explorer.

It is not just a machine. It's a special machine.

Grandpa: Wonderful idea, Aza.

Aza : How to make it, I show you, Denpa.

Monday, Febr 25, 2013. (On the way to school a neighboring house was on fire)

Grandpa: Look! What's happening?

Mommy: It's fire!

Aza : Oh!?

Grandpa: I think we need a fire fighter. You can make a fire fighter with your blocks,

Aza.

Aza : I don't know how to make fire fighter.

Grandpa: You can make a try. I'll show you how.

Aza : Okay, Denpa.

(Monday, Febr 25, 2013. On the way home from school)

Grandpa: Hi, Aza.

Aza : Hi, Denpa.

Grandpa: How's your school day?

Aza : Great!

Grandpa: What did you play?

Aza : I play water

Aza : You are naughty Mommy.

Mommy: No, I'm not naughty.

Aza : You're so naughty. You're not listen to me.

Grandpa: You said Mommy is naughty. Why?

Aza : She her put lipstick on face.

Mommy: Who's absent today?

Aza : Rosa

Mommy: Why?

Aza : I don't know.

(Tuesday, Febr 26, 2013. On the way to go to a ballet class)

Aza : Den, do you have money to buy something?

Grandpa: Yes. Don't worry.

Aza : I have (ballet) performance at Java Mall. I need costume. Can you buy me costume?

Grandpa : Okay.

Aza : Thank you, Denpa.

(Wednesday, Febr 27, 2013. In preparation to school)

Aza : I have pancake today

Grandpa: You mean pancake for your meal time at school?

Aza : Yes. Cause I am boring with mie all the time.

Grandpa: You mean noodle?

Aza : Yes. But I don't have sandwich?

Grandpa: Sandwich?

Aza : Yes. Pancake and sandwich.

Grandpa: It's okay. Who makes it?

Aza : Mommy, of course.

(Thursday, Febr 28, 2012. On the way to school)

Aza : Denpa. What is Tante Tefi?

Grandpa: Pardon?

Aza : What is Tante Tefi, the English?

Grandpa: Aunt Tefi

Aza : Auntie?

Grandpa: Right.

(Friday, March 1, 213. In the living room)

Aza : Tomorrow I want to "Toko Ada". Do you join me?

Grandpa: I'm afraid I cannot.

Aza : Why?

Grandpa: Because I'm working tomorrow. What do you want to buy?

Aza : I cannot tell you.

Grandpa: Why?

Aza : Because I want to give you surprise.

Grandpa: You should know what to buy and then you go.

Aza : I want to buy a hair-clip.

(Saturday. March 2, 2013. In the living room)

Aza : Denpa, Can you play with me?

Grandpa: Ok. What is it?

Aza : Android. I show you how to play the game. Now you do it by yourself.

Grandpa : I'll make a try.

Aza : Oh, dear. You can do it.

(Sunday. March 3, 2013. In the bedroom)

Grandpa: Hi, Aza. What are you doing?

Aza : I'm not done my project. Can you help me?

Grandpa: Project? What is it?

Aza : I make shapes. Can you make holes?

Grandpa: Ok

Aza : Make something with this string.

Grandpa: Ok

Aza : What are you making, Denpa?

Grandpa: A necklace and a gold medal.

Aza : Wow. Beautiful. I like it.

Mommy, I have necklace!

Mommy: Wow.

(Sunday. March 4, 2013. At home)

Aza : Let' make a cake.

Mommy: Okay.

Aza : Mommy, I need sugar. Can you gave me sugar?

Mommy: I have no sugar.

Aza : Just pretend, Mommy.

Grandpa: I have some sugar. Here it is.

Aza : Thank you, Dendpa. Now I need butter.

Grandpa: Here it is.

Aza : Thank you, Denpa. I need...

Grandpa: Eggs?

Aza : Yes, Denpa. Eggs.

Grandpa: Here it is.

Aza : Thank you.

(Tuesday. March 5, 2013)

Aza : Denpa. What day is today?

Grandpa: It's Tuesday.

Aza : You write here (gave a marker and pointed to the white-board)

Grandpa: Okay (while writing TUESDAY on the white-board)

Aza : Good. Date?

Grandpa: Fifth ... of March.

Aza : No. Five dot three dot two thousand thirteen (while writing "5.3.2013" on the white board)

(Wednesday. March 6, 2013.)

Aza : I need to give surprise to Mommy.

Grandpa: What would you like to make?

Aza : I want to make pancake.

Grandpa: Great idea.

Aza : Yap. But I don't know how to make it.

Grandpa: I can help you.

Aza : Yes, Grandpa. We can work together as a team!

(Thursday March 7, 2013. On the way home from school)

Aza : Mommy, tomorrow is a Pet Day.

Mommy: Really? So what?

Aza : Can you buy me pet? I need to bring pet to school tomorrow.

Grandpa: You can borrow Grandpa's bird.

Aza : Thank you, Denpa.

(Friday, March 8, 2013. On the way to school)

Aza : I like this toast. It's yummy.

Mommy: That is a butter toast.

Aza : But it's salty. You put too much salt, Mommy.

Mommy: It's not salt. It's butter.

(Tuesday, March 12, 2013)

Aza : Te Tefi is forgot his medicine.

Grandpa: I think so.

Azs : Did you wet, Den?

Grandpa: Yeap.

Aza : I am not.

Aza : Can I eat one more, Mom?

Grandpa: What do you want to eat?

Aza : Tempura.

: How about this?

(Wednesday, March 13, 2013)

Aza: I check your heart, Mommy

Mommy: Please

Aza : Your blood pressure is good. Now I check your eyes

(Thursday, March 14, 2013)

Aza : I wonder you could draw pets

Mommy: Let me try

Aza : What did you draw?

Mommy: I'm drawing kitty

(Friday, 15, 2013)

Aza : Guess what Mommy. It's green, yellow, red and pink and many cars

Mommy : Traffic light

Aza : Right

Mommy : But it's without pink. It's just green, red and yellow.

The data of this study have shown that the dialogues between the child, her mother and her grandfather are inherently interactive in the sense that they typically do not involve simply one move from one speaker. It is noted that after one speaker has initiated an exchange, another speaker is very likely responding. The commodity exchanged could be either information or goods and services. The roles associated with the exchange relations are either giving or demanding. The participants in the interactive are the child, her mother and her grandfather. The social role of the mother and the grandfather gives access to the full range of initiating speech functions when interacting with child, while the social role of the child places constraints on both the frequency and types of initiations that can be made to the parents and to the child.

In spite of the fact that the child has been able to perform the speech functions, the language realization has not met a sophisticated pragmatic level of politeness. In using language to ask for information, apologize, persuade and inform, for example, the child has not learned to use the correct words and sentence forms to communicate a range of meanings in her interaction with adults. Apart from the shortcomings in expressing these intentions, the child has not properly interpreted other people's messages. To some extent, however, the child has gone beyond just acquiring grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. The introduction of language chunks is likely the reason why the child demonstrated the ability to use language effectively to fulfill the functions and the goals.

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded that with the parent's help the child acquired a number of language functions categorized in seven key areas namely interpersonal exchange, information, opinions, feelings, suasion, problems, and future

scenarios.

In the area of interpersonal exchange, the child expressed greeting, making introduction, extending, accepting and declining invitations and offers, making engagements, expressing and acknowledging gratitude, complementing and congratulating, reacting to the interlocutor's speech, showing attention, interest, surprise, sympathy, happiness, disbelief and disappointment. In the area of information the child did asking for and giving information, reporting (describing and narrating), remembering, explaining and discussing. In the area of opinions she did expressing opinions and attitudes, agreeing and disagreeing, approving and disapproving, and showing satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

In the area of feelings, the child expressed feelings of happiness and annoyance. In the area of suasion she did suggesting, requesting and instructing, giving orders and advising. In the area of problem the child did complaining, criticizing, blaming, admitting, denying, and apologizing. In the area of future scenarios she did expressing wishes, hopes, desires, plans, goals, intentions, promising, predicting, speculating and discussing possibilities and capabilities of doing something.

The child's utterances emerged through a number of learning experiences in her daily life. The child here did most of their learning when she was playing. During this time, child built on what she already knew and tried out new skills and ideas within her zone of proximal development.

### **Implication**

The data suggest that Scaffolding requires parents to model or demonstrate appropriate behavior or knowledge and then guide students step by step to perform the specified task. Because these techniques involve a lot of give and take between parent and children they work best in one-on-one, or small group settings.

The first step in scaffolding is to have the parent model the correct way to complete the task. Each time a new task or new objective is introduced the parent should first demonstrate how the task should be completed. In an early intervention this may be reading a passage or answering questions that relate to reading passage.

To build upon the modeling behavior, parents should discuss the task being completed by offering explanations that make it clear to children why he or she completed the task in a certain way. For example, a parent answering questions about a reading passage would explain the steps he or she took to determine the answer to the question, referring back to the clues in the reading passage that helped him or her locate the answer.

After showing how the first task was completed, parents can then move onto the new task and this time invite the children to help in the completion of the task. A reading passage can be read by the parent or by children in the group and the parent will go through the questions with the group by asking the students their ideas about what the answers might be.

As students supply correct answers, teachers should focus on those answers and ask the students to explain what made them choose those answers. Just as the teacher earlier offered her explanations for reaching her conclusions before, the students will do the same and should become more confident at choosing the correct answer. In cases where the incorrect answer is supplied the questions the teacher asks should help guide students to the conclusion that the answer is wrong.

As children become more comfortable with completing the tasks and seeing the techniques used by the parent to guide the class to the correct answers, children can assume this role as they help their peers in completing a task. Once a task is understood, students might ask their peers questions similar to those the teacher would pose, to help identify and explain the reasoning behind correct answers.

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