

The analysis of father's perspectives on child with speech delay

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ABSTRACT: This research aims to understand father's perspective in children with speech delay problem. Many research claim that father has crucial roles in early young learners' development socially and cognitively. Thus, this research is trying to explore fathers' perception on their child who has speech delay problem. Qualitative approach research was employed in this research and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is used to analyze the data. Three respondents are involved in this research; two are based in Bandung and one respondent is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. In-depth interview is chosen to collect the data which then being transcribed and analyzed. The results show that first; all respondents have inadequate knowledge of speech delay problem. Second, the respondents thought that their child interaction with gadget is detected as the cause of speech delay. To conclude, there is a need to improve fathers' understanding both on the speech delay issue and their roles in parenting.

1 FATHERHOOD AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

A study conducted by Sumargi, et al. (2013) says that the parenting practice in developing countries, especially in Indonesia, still shows low levels. Agreed with the study, another report on research about fatherhood in Indonesia conducted by Levtov, Van der Gaag et al. (2015) says that fathers in Indonesia are still experiencing the difficulties to get involved in parenting.

The research report above inspires that research on father involvement (fatherhood) is visible to be conducted. As we know, parenting is the interaction between parent (father or mother) and their child, while the father's role and the mother's role have contributed complementarity to the child's development. Without having any intention to make a wide dichotomy between them, this study intends to see and conduct a deeper investigation on fatherhood. A study has shown that father involvement in parenting helps children to grow and develop better. As stated by Stockall & Dennis (2012, p. 299), "... fathers and paternal role models make a unique contribution to children development".

Meanwhile, speech delay in early childhood as a common disorder that we can observe Indonesian society (Tabloid Nova 2014) is an impairment that might be trigger by many things. Language ability is the ability to communicate. The ability to communicate in children can be seen from the ability of the

child mumbling until they are able to say the word and form a sentence. Children experience a significant phase of language development in their early development period. Otto (2015) said that, the communication skills of children include receptive language and expressive language. While, according to Harris in Oates & Grayson (2006) the development of children's language can be divided into two namely the understanding of the word (comprehension) and the use of words in speech (production)

When children are unable to produce speech or words, we can understand their needs through their gesture, facial expression or even their cry. This is what so-called by pre-verbal communication (Bruner 1983). According to Bruner (1983 p. 39-42), to function Language Acquisition Device (LAD), there is a system called as Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) where in LASS there is an interaction between parent and child which will function LAD. Thus we can understand that the interaction between parent and child also determines the ability of children in acquiring language. Another study says that good attachment is also a determinant factor in child language skills (Murray & Yingling 2000)

Specific language disorder represents a language disorder focusing on the inability of the children to produce words without any co-morbid with other disorder. Parents need to give attention to their kids especially in certain period of development, when

the children have not shown the development that match with developmental milestones.

Noticing to the attachment perspective in social-interaction context, language development also related to child-parent interaction. Thus, there is a possibility that language delay in children also caused by “unfinished business” in attachment between parents and the kids. Meanwhile a good attachment between parents and the kids is represented in a good mental condition both in parents and the kids. Urwin (2002 p 75) states

“Delays or difficulties in language development would then emerge as part of a broader problem in thinking unthinkable thoughts and in representing emotional experience symbolically. This puts the emphasis on the increasing fullness of mental life, which accrues from becoming a language user, rather than on what is given up. Rather than language development distancing us from internal objects, it is part of the process through which we acquire them, and build an internal word”.

Meanwhile as stated by Jones (2007), language delay or speech delay might be caused of the lack of attachment between father and the kids or the father did not showed up as a figure that helps separation-individuation process. The separation-individuation helps the kids to the develop their self-object, the phase that needed in very young age to know that their self is an individual that able to do many thing to include produce a word or start to communicate. Another fact that supports this statement is a research conducted by Klaniczay (2000), which states that stuttering in kids might be caused by the difficulties of the kids to separate from specific object, or the anxiety faced by the parents that influence child anxiety which happened causing the stutter in the kids.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study is Phenomenology study since the study tries to capture the experiences of father and also father role in parenting. Three respondents were involved in this research. Two respondents were live in Bandung, while one respondent lives in Jakarta. In-depth interview with semi-structured interview principle were using as data collection technique. Respondent validation or member checking was conducted to validate and ask whether there is any objection from the respondent before displaying the data.

To keep the privacy of the respondent, anonymity or pseudonym principles were also used in this research. Thus all the names that mention in this article are not their real names. After all data gathered, then Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) was employed to analyze the data. The IPA steps

are: 1) *Reading and re-reading*; 2) *Initial noting*; 3) *Developing Emergent themes*; 4) *Searching for connections across emergent themes*; 5) *Moving the next cases*; and 6) *Looking for patterns across case* (Smith 2009). The themes emerged after the analysis is; father perception, gadget and speech delays and plays as the core activities with children.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Gadget and Father Perception

As stated by the respondents, the child experience speech delay shows almost similar symptoms. Mr. Wahyu and Mr. Yayan say that their children show normal speech development until their child is about one year old. But in its development there was an impasse if we do not want to mention the decline in the development of their children speech acts.

I am confused, when he was 9 months old, he was able to say “papa”, “mama”. Even though he was say as “papem” “mamem”... After 1 year old, everything that he was able to speak was gone. He only shouts meaningless”. (Mr. Yayan, Bandung)

Another statement also given by the respondent. Mr. Wahyu says that at the beginning his son was just like normal baby, but then there is a decline compared to the previous month.

“We realize, there is a decline compared to the previous month. So he was not able to communicate, mostly he only pointing out and dragging to convey what he wants”. (Mr. Wahyu, Jakarta)

What is meant by the similar symptoms is the child's early ability to communicate. The respondents' children are starting to produce babble or chattering and then stagnated when the child progresses in the next stage of speech development that is producing words. Instead of producing words or utterances, their child experiences setbacks with loss of speech or their verbal skills.

Furthermore, another interesting point from the father perception of the speech delay that happened to the children is their perception on the cause of speech delay. Directly, there are respondents who believe that television becomes an instrument that causes the child having speech delay

“Coincidentally, it was our fault. When my son is one year old, my wife was pregnant. She wasn't allowed to carry my son. While at that time my son was very attach to his mom. I start to turn on TV for my son. So it was start everything. From that moment, my son always asks to watch TV”. (Mr. Yayan in Bandung).

By saying, *“From that moment, my son always ask to watch TV”*, we can understand that TV was originally a tool for temporary compensation to entertain and in the end, it become a necessity for the child. Here, Mr. Yayan tries to say that in the end his son asks to regularly turn on the television as part of the

child's life, and sees that television is the cause of the speech delay experienced by his son.

In addition to television, one of the other respondents indirectly said that the gadgets in this case the mobile phone also turned out to have influenced the child's behavior. *"If he sees my phone, he always grabs my phone"*. (Mr. Yayan, Bandung). The purpose of the above sentence, of course, is when the father holds the cell phone, and then the child will come to pick up and play the phone. From the above statement, we can analyze that his son is familiar with the gadget.

In a study of the relation between the duration of watching television and the speech delay in children, it was conveyed that there is a positive correlation between the duration of the watching television and the speech delay experienced by children (Safitri 2013). On top of that, in an informal conversation with two other respondents, who were not recorded during the interviews during the data collection process, they also acknowledged the influence of technological devices on their children's speech.

From the respondent statement above, we can infer that the interaction between father and their kids are using technological device or gadget. The social interaction between them; then rely on the device. While in a study, it is stated that games, interaction and social games are having positive effect to child vocalization (Hsu et al. 2014). Furthermore Hsu, Iyer & Fogel (2014, p. 135) says that child vocalization area related to social context social *"...infant vocalizations highlight the role of social contexts, in which the functions of infant vocalization can be understood only within its context of production..."* Then, we understand that interaction between father and children when there is social context when they are interact each other, likelihood helping children to vocalize better.

Referring to language development theory, parents' respond to child pre verbal communication will determine child ability on the next developmental phase. Thus in social interaction theory, Locke states that response from parents or other adults will help children to vocalize *"...This cooperative breeding practice, which presumably grew in response to increased care needs, may have added to infants' motivation to vocalize more effectively..."* (Locke 2006 p. 157).

3.2 Lack of information on speech delay

The issue of television and gadget actually indicates that fathers are aware of the role they really need to take. Father need to do various activities with closer interactions that emotionally engaged with their children. The activity that fathers did with the children also showed up in the data we can also see from the data the way the respondents engage in stimulating the improvement of children's speaking skills.

"I play with my son like others generally, playing to the field. Stimulating his motoric and sensory. We start to interact with my son". (Mr. Wahyu, Jakarta).

Playing with a focus on motor and sensory activity becomes a prominent issue in the respondent's statement above. The statement when the respondent says *"like others generally"*, indicates the activity given may look the same as the child in general. The effort undertaken indeed needs to be appreciated, but children who experience speech delays need activities that are more than just playing like other children generally. Another respondent also has tried another effort; which can we read from the data below. Nevertheless the children with speech delay need activities that more than the activity that normal kids did,

"I usually ask my son to play ball, chit-chat. If I need to watch TV, I am asking "what's that my son?" I play quite often (Bapak Yayan, di Bandung).

Taking notes at the transcription of the interview, it is no wonder the parents are still doing the stimulation that only touches the "surface" only, not on the deeper involvement either emotionally or the activities where the father enjoys his existence with the child. The stimulation provides by the father in helping children with speech delay not really help the child. This may be because of father does not have adequate on what speech delay is, why and how to help child with speech delay.

Respondents' inadequate information about speech delay disorder is very clear, as we can see in the answers of the respondents

"In my family, there's something like that. So, when my uncle got married, his son also diagnosed speech delay. It might be genetics factor or what, the therapist also said it might be genetics." (Mr. Yayan di Bandung)

Knowing that there is an inappropriate development of verbal skills in their child seems not to make the respondent find out more about the speech delay. Thus, respondents emphasize the possibility of genetic factors as the cause of speech delay.

"But, it can't be standard I am asking to many people. It might because I am asking to many relatives, I don't know about speech delay, because I myself hasn't emmmhh". *"Ya ok"*. *"I try"*. (Mr. Yayan)

Somewhat surprising because it appears from what was said by the respondents above, the respondent has not understood the cause of the speech delay. The phrase, *"because I myself hasn't emmmhh"*. *"Ya ok"*. *"I try"*, implying that the respondent has not known the problems related to the speech delay and ultimately trying to accept and entrust the therapeutic process as a solution to the existing problems.

"I am personally ya.. I don't have any knowledge. I am afraid my son needs something" (Mr Wahyu).

Information about what happens to their child will actually determine what the father needs to do. How

dad will play his role better is of course determined by how much information they have about what his child is going through. Harrison et al. (2007) says that what fathers feel about having children with special needs is that accurate and precise information about what happens to their child becomes the most important need. So it becomes understandable when the lack of information also affects how the father plays a role in parenting in children with speech delay, in the case of this study and also affects how the feelings of the father experienced this incident.

4 CONCLUSION

The interesting part from this study is that father role in parenting is only on stimulation and play activities, so that from the side of emotional closeness and caring activities in nature of everyday domestic activities father still need to do a lot of effort. This is also corroborated by research conducted by Machin (2015) who says that between the perceptions that father has about the role of father in parenting and the reality that occurs in real life there is still a "gap".

The "gap" between reality and perception on father role that happened in our society that represents in this research generally might be because of father didn't have many accesses to the information that they need. From the data, it is clear that father had involved in the activity with their children, and they also eager to do many things with their children. Since it was a bit hard for father to get the access to the information on what is speech delay because of social structure and also the patriarchal aspect in our society that put father as a "breadwinner", so involving father in the activity with the children would also give some benefit to this issue.

Referring to the father role theory presented by Paul & Palkovitz, then on this theme the role of father as "the shared caregiver role" is clearly visible. The respondents played their role as secondary caregivers or caregivers with their spouses. As Miller (2011) points out, some studies suggest there are difficulties faced by adult males who have become fathers of "being both provider and supportive partners and home builders at the same time."

One thing that needs to be appreciated from the perspective of the respondents in this study is their considerable involvement and sense of responsibility towards the condition of the family and the condition of their children who experience speech delay. Another thing that may still be the question of father role is that, as Dermott in Miller (2011) says, is ambiguity and lacks the specific terminology of "involvement" itself. So when the involvement and role of the father of the care and stimulation activities that need to be given is not maximally likely to be

influenced by many things, it is rather difficult to say or define that a father has not been fully involved.

From the relation between fatherhood and child development, we can figure out that many benefits that we can get from a very good attachment and interaction between father and children. Children language ability will rise significantly as well as their psychological and emotional aspects. While here in this study, we can conclude that father involvement and activity with children limited to play activities. Additionally children with speech delay, needs activity more than just play together with father. Father social interaction, attachment and involvement in domestic activity still needed. One of the reason of the uninvolved father in parenting might be as stated by Warin in Williams (2008) that culture paradigm which says that father as "breadwinner" can cause father withdraw their self and uninvolved in "traditional" parenting which mainly mother did.

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