

Empowering EFL Parents for Interlocutor's Role with Their Children through Contextualizing Speaking Activities at Home by Using Supplementary Videos (Video Material & Explainer Video)

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Abstract

In this paper, the EFL (English as a foreign language) children's verbal practices outside classroom contexts were enhanced by guiding their parents with supplementary bilingual videos adequately prepared for the purpose. To achieve this objective, pretest, posttest, and interview were used as data collection tools. The participants of both groups were taught the same content using the traditional classroom in classroom; however, the parents of participants in the experimental group were integrated with these supplementary videos. The statistically analyzed data has shown that the EFL children whose parents underwent the two supplementary videos (experimental group's participants) significantly outperformed the children whose parents underwent only the students' book (control group's participants). Hence, supplementary bilingual videos (video material and explainer videos) are effective and supportive means of guiding EFL parents in home speaking practices with their children. Thus, it recommends that EFL parents be trained and guided for better speaking practices with their children at home.

Keywords

Parents, Children, Video Materials, Explainer Videos, Interaction, Engagement

1. Introduction

Creating appropriate situations for verbal language practices in EFL contexts,

particularly outside classrooms, is not an easy task. Language learning activities outside classroom contexts may not be effective without helpful guidance and practical support, particularly with young learners. It was noticed that those EFL parents involved with their children in language learning receive no guidance from EFL teachers and instead toiler their ways of helping their children. Thus, the study attempts to optimize EFL parents' potential for effective English practice with their children at home, guided by supplementary videos designed on purpose. Maximizing language practices outside classroom contexts becomes necessary because the dedicated time for language practices in EFL classrooms is minimal, particularly in most EFL classrooms containing many EFL students. Governments' policies have been ineffective because teachers did not have enough time to create student-centered curriculums (Punthumasen, 2007). Children's early communication skills are the best predictor of future cognitive skills and school performance (Rosetti, 1996). In addition, parental educational involvement has been widely studied as one of the most important predictors of academic success and positively impacted students' learning competency (Davies, 1993; Smit & Driessen, 2007; Canō et al., 2016). Because the parents are in an ideal position to motivate and help their children learn, even if they have only basic English themselves and are learning alongside their young (Dunn, 2008). The most appropriate opportunity for supporting children's language development that with their parents. By sharing, parents can not only bring their child's English language and activities into family life but can also influence their young children's attitude to language learning and other cultures (Dunn, 2008). Talking to children is one of the most important ways parents can help them learn to communicate and develop strong language skills (Gardner-Neblett & Gallagher, 2013). Moreover, parents want to do the best for their children; however, they need a guide to actively engage and encourage their intellectual and social development (National Literacy Trust's Talk to Your Baby Campaign, 2005). It was observed that many parents are unaware of what to do with their children's education and have a limited understanding of their role in their children's learning (Bonci, 2008). That is why this study is to be conducted. Parents take part in children's learning and school performance by offering cognitive and emotional support to students at home (Brannon & Dauksas, 2012; Avila Daza & Garabito, 2009), and the parents can become a valuable source and support for children in their educational achievements (Kukk et al., 2015; Widding & Berge, 2014; Forey et al., 2015). Therefore, EFL parents may have an active role; if they are guided by actions designed for the interaction with their children. According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), cooperation between parents and schools may be more helpful in obtaining better results in children's learning than parents and schools working separately. To better understand EFL, children demand that parents and teachers work together to create links between the home and school environment (Goren, 2003). Regardless of any barriers, teachers and parents must make an effort to support children of English language learners

beginning at a young age (Coppola, 2005). According to Dunn (2008), he states that parents' help is the best for the following:

- Parents can focus on their children, spending some one-to-one time with them.
- Parents can fit English sessions into any part of their day to suit their child and themselves.
- Parents can regulate the length of an English session and select activities to fit their child's needs, interests, and ability to concentrate.
- Parents know their children intimately and can intuitively judge the type of English talking suitable for their ways of picking up the language.
- Parents can best interpret their child's moods and respond to them. For example, children have days when they eagerly absorb language and others find it difficult to concentrate.
- Parents can introduce more fun, as they are working with an individual, not a class.

Many studies have confirmed the significant contribution of parental involvement in language learning with their children. For instance, research studies (Wei & Zhou, 2012; Lee, 2008; Liu, 2013; Kumar, 2012; Torres & Castañeda-Peña, 2016; Alam et al., 2018) have reported that EFL parents play a vital role in supporting their children's language learning that resulting in very important academic achievement in favor of their children. According to the study conducted by (Boivin et al., 2014), most EFL parents were very interested in helping their children to learn English. Still, the parents lacked knowledge of how to do so effectively.

2. Methodology

2.1. Study Design

The study used both experimental and descriptive methods. Thus, qualitative and quantitative data were used to provide a better chance of attaining reliable findings.

2.2. Instruments

The study employed three data sources pre-test, post-test, and parents' interview. The data collection lasted for four weeks. Participating children were pre-tested using the Pre A1 Starters Speaking test1 of Cambridge Assessment English. A pre-test was administered to determine participants' homogeneity (EFL starters) in speaking skills, and a post-test to show the children's developmental level in language speaking has improved. Both pre-and-post tests' questions mix open-ended questions with closed ended-questions. They were designed to name some familiar people or things (e.g. such as family, animals, and school or household objects), give fundamental descriptions for some objects, such as how many, color, size, or location, or respond to very simple questions with single words or "yes/no" response. The test-and-retest technique was used to

measure the test's reliability. In this respect, a pilot sample of six children from the population. Pearson's correlation computes statistical evidence; it was found that the correlation coefficient of the two tests is 0.82, which is so acceptable for the research. The only difference between the post and pre-tests was the sequence of the questions that had been changed to avoid practice effect on the participants. During the treatment, a set of processes was carried out, such as the observation by the EFL teacher and the parents of the children in the experimental group, recording children's progress in the classroom and at home, and parents' feedback. The interview data intend to check parents' experience of how the supplementary videos influence home verbal interaction with their children and explore difficulties and identify any further comments or suggestions for better performance.

2.3. Participants

The study investigated EFL Sudanese children's verbal interaction by involving their parents. The children's age range is between five and six years; their parents' age range is between thirty-three and thirty-eight for males and twenty-five and thirty for females. The total number of the participating children was seventeen (nine males and eight females). Likewise, the total number of the parents who took part was seventeen (ten females and seven males). All participants (parents and their children) were living abroad in Saudi Arabia in 2022. The parents of the children are all bachelor holders in different specializations; their English background was estimated as pre-intermediate based on which they were selected to participate in the study. Thus, Parents' English language background is adequate for the examination for supporting their children as EFL starters. It is worth mentioning that the parents of the participated children in the experimental group are only the parents who took part in the study. The children participants are divided into two groups; group "A" is comprises nine children and represents the experimental group. While group "B" also consisted of eight children representing the control group. Both groups almost have the same English background knowledge described as EFL starters; however, for this study, the focus was only on developing speaking skills at the early stages of learning.

2.4. Procedures

The children in both groups were introduced to the same selected lessons as a 40-minutes-class per day employing the traditional method. In addition, these conventional classes are integrated with the two supplementary bilingual videos (English/Arabic) sent via WhatsApp chat group to achieve the study's requirements. All these videos were bilingually prepared to facilitate EFL parents' home-task. Two workshops with the parents of the experimental group were held. The first workshop was held before collecting data to familiarize the parents with how to deal with the supplementary videos (video materials & explain-

er videos) for changing their items into actions. Then, another workshop was organized after holding the post-test to interview the parents to check their experiences and expose their observations, comments, clarifications, suggestions... etc.

The video materials are pre-recorded videos of children's lessons in their EFL classes, which are a resource for children and their parents. The content of these videos depends on the Cambridge English qualifications books' content, namely Pre A1-staters, Pre A1-stater-classroom activities and wordlist picture which adapted bilingually just for those who start learning English. The video materials contain names of familiar family people, animals, schools, or household objects to describe, e.g. how many, color, size, or location through Wh-questions and yes/no questions. The video materials are intended to be shared with the EFL parents of EFL children in the experimental group. They are mainly designed to familiarize EFL parents with EFL class content. They can be a resource for both of them because the participated children were still starters to transfer classroom contents to their parents. Each video material was accompanied by speaking activities to be achieved as homework. In addition, these videos can be a resource for the children, so they watch them as many times as they want. The explainer videos were carefully designed to guide the parents to take actions that enable them to play the interlocutor's role with their children using video materials. The explainer videos are prepared to be only shared with the EFL parents whose children participate in the experimental group. Therefore, any material video accompanied by an explainer video to guide speaking topics and activities is more transparent and digestible. These videos are short, breaking the directions into smaller parts with model examples teaching EFL parents to play the role of interlocutor with their children.

It is worth mentioning that the EFL teachers keep updated with EFL parents and provide them feedback immediately, particularly with difficulties that via WhatsApp chat group (e.g. text messaging, audio, and video). Children's production was regularly recorded, checked, and appropriate feedback and clarifications were provided. In addition, all concerns were discussed in the WhatsApp chat group, such as children's progress and response, parents' difficulties, and enjoyment of children and parents. At the end of the treatment period (four weeks), the participants in both groups (experimental & control) were subjected to the post-oral test. Afterward, the interview (in Arabic, the participants' mother tongue) was conducted. The interview was done only for the EFL parents whose children represented the experimental group's participants; the interview took place in the second workshop held for the purpose.

3. Findings and Discussion

The study aims to empower EFL parents to take action, such as interlocutor's role in communicative speaking skills, through three supplementary videos that expand language practices outside classroom contexts and improve verbal inte-

reaction outcomes. The Collected data is mainly to check whether the performance of the experimental group's participants attains progress due to the treatment utilizing the supplementary videos compared to the version of the control group's participants that depends on classroom practices. The EFL children practice at home with their parents for what they were routinely taught in the classroom.

3.1. Pre-Test Analysis

In **Table 1**, it was found that there was no significant difference in the means of scores between control and experimental groups in the pre-tests because the significance (P) was greater than 0.05. Although the participants of both groups were teaching English as EFL starters with much focus on learning to speak mainly, they had only learned English letters' alphabet. Furthermore, all the participants studied English as EFL starters in a class that was the same one used to teach them speaking for the study. Thus, the pre-tests showed the same results in both groups that attained homogeneity.

3.2. Post-Test Analysis

In **Table 2**, the statistical results of the post-tests have shown a significant difference between the control and experimental group in the means of the scores. Because the significance (P) was less than (0.05), there were significant differences in favor of the experimental group due to utilizing the supplementary videos empowering EFL parents to take action of interlocutor role in the communicative speaking activities. Many factors influence making parents-children engagement success particularly, in verbal interaction. One of these factors is that EFL parents lack awareness of what, how, and when to take action, empowering them of the interlocutors' roles in the verbal communicative activities. As a result, many EFL parents spent much more time and effort with their children without recording any vital progress. For four consecutive weeks, the children's interaction was observed. Throughout these four weeks participating children's progress is regularly followed, especially all conversations result in spoken activities recorded, observed and checked, and then feedback is made. Participating

Table 1. Pre-test's result of experimental and control groups.

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental Group	9	2.13	0.516	0.000	1.000
Control Group	8	2.13	0.640	0.000	1.000

Table 2. Post-test's result of experimental and control groups.

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental Group	9	2.20	0.561	0.000	23.684
Control Group	8	9.53	1.060	0.000	23.684

children understood the simple meaning of English words and phrases and response to the basic instructions. The children were trained to use the English language to communicate their primary intentions, such as they find no difficulties in answering yes/no questions or nodding their heads to the questions like “Do you have a pen? Is it blue? Is this your bag? ... etc.? They also answer the Wh-questions that its answer requires no more than a word or two; for instance, how many books are on the table? What is the color of your bag? Most of them could respond very well to the instructions, e.g. put this pen on the blue table, take the book under the chair, and describe the object’s location, e.g. where is the blue pen? Answer: under the chair... etc.

The progression of the children towards understanding the English language was determined by teachers’ and parents’ observations of how they interact with their teacher’s questions in the classroom and parents’ questions at home when the speaking activities are taking place. An effective interaction in classroom speaking activities results from an adequate parent-children engagement for speaking activities at home. In the beginning, most children responded to the simple questions by nodding their heads. Then they begin using the simple words and phrases they just learned and practiced. Most of them used simple words and phrases learned in the classroom and practiced and confirmed at home with their parents. Generally, children showed interest when asked to describe the color of the objects in the scene or tell the names of things or objects that appear in the background.

3.3. Interview

The interview asked parents to reflect on their personal experiences and observations. Then, parents shared their perspectives on their child’s progress over four weeks. The video materials shared with parents contain the learning content of each class. They were designed as a resource for parents and their children at home, helping them learn more basic English words. Each video material has its explainer video accompanied to help the parents understand how the content of the video material favors their engagement with their children in speaking activities and how to deal with the challenges that may emerge. Thus, parents and their children worked together using new words in different realistic, simple contexts to maximize parents-children involvement in the spoken activities. The emerging themes generated from the interview are discussed under the major categories: parental role, videos as supportive means for parents and children’s responses.

1) Parental Role

Fourteen out of seventeen parents reflected that they could play a supportive role with their children and create a friendly communicative atmosphere due to the videos provided. Firstly, we play the role of facilitator when our children clearly understand the items we present, then change our parts into interlocutors. Some parents’ feedback is as follows:

Parents A

“What facilitate the process and make it interesting that all the items that intend to be learned are available real object in our surrounding environment.”

Parent B

“I find no more difficulties in dealing with the video materials and applying all their instructions because the explainer videos elaborate on how each part of the material can be used and applied.”

Parent C

“The hard task is in the presentation stage in which I do much focus simultaneously on making the meaning of learned items clear and correctly pronounced. Then my child is very active in practicing the learned items in different contexts.”

Parent D

“My child enjoys learning that indicates for the objects that are part of his everyday activity and home culture, such as (colors of an object, toys, name of objects that my child uses in drawing, cutting, and forming new things... etc. Therefore, I am trying to create a learning context to connect my child with things he likes.”

Parent E

When I point to any object around us, I mean the one that my child has already learned and repose by telling me its name, color and location. I enjoyed his interaction and responses to my questions.

The parents use the native language “language” in conveying the intended meaning of new language learning items with the correct pronunciation. The parents play the role of presenter and informant, following a complete control strategy in presenting new language items to their children to understand them. After giving a new language, parents adopt the interlocutor role for practicing what has been understood in the early stage which means they move from control to less control. Therefore, the role of the parents can be effective in terms of involvement with their children in case they are well guided for that.

2) Videos as Supportive Means for Parents

All the parents reported that utilizing supplementary videos (video material & explainer videos) is a helpful guide for effective interaction with them. Some parents’ feedback is as follows:

Parent A

Primarily, I used to involve my children in some speaking activities. Still, after being provided with the explainer videos, I found that I could do much more to help my children rather than I was doing. For example, I depended entirely on the students’ books as the leading resource without sharing any items from the book cover.

Parent B

I discovered that my child understood the way his teacher adopted. Therefore, I was keen to follow the videos’ instructions to interact better. Furthermore, these videos facilitate for us to make a warm learning environment because they

are recorded bilingually.

Parent C

Although I was taken for some time to carefully check the content in the video materials and directions in the explainer videos, I enjoy working with my child by the guide of these videos.

Parent D

The supplementary videos save my time and efforts in summarizing, correctly pronouncing, and deciding what and how to do. One of the reasons these videos facilitate my task is they were bilingually recorded. Previously, I spent much time and effort translating and pronouncing correctly the items that I intended to review with my child.

The supplementary videos, namely video materials & explainer videos, are practical guides for EFL parents to involve children in what intends to be achieved. They make parents' roles easier and facilitate learning processes for children. Video materials become a reference for meaning and accurate pronunciation. Explainer videos become the primary resource from which directions and instructions are taken.

3) EFL Children's Responding to Their Parents' Actions

The majority of the parents, fifteen out of seventeen, show that their children positively interact with their parents. Some of the parents give the following feedback as follows:

Parent A

When I try to make sure my child understands the meaning of the learning objects well. I intentionally say the wrong definition for objects in the scene means something else. The purpose of this exercise is to see if my child can correct me; for example, I point to a green book,' and I say, "it is a blue book", or I point to an object such as "a table" and say "this chair".

Parent B

When I mentioned the object's name in the scene, my child pointed to it or nodded her head without any verbal comment. But now she got confidence as she can interact positively in many situations around us.

Parent C

My child feel relax and spontaneously names things around him, telling their names, colors, location... etc. When I ask him, for example, what is this, he answers: "it is a book", question: what color is it? Then, he responds: it is green' or question: where is the book? Finally, he replies: "on the table".

Parent D

When my child saw a picture in a scene, I observed that they immediately indicated to it by shouting out its name or defining its color.

One of the essential things the study attained was that it offered an opportunity for the children as EFL starters to be involved in verbal interaction that acquired their confidence in their early stage of learning, which helped them express themselves confidently. In addition, the sufficient and spontaneous practice that the children receive at home with their parents trains them to feel re-

laxed at any verbal interaction. Parents concluded that the course was delightful for both themselves and their children. It helped their child become more aware of their surroundings of the objects with their names and be more eager to verbally express their emotions to peers and teachers when they were in need. In addition, children's familiarity with the simple vocabulary words enables them to make appropriate connections.

4. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, most parents offer continual encouragement in different forms for their children to attain progress in language learning; however, the motivational support cannot be practical unless followed by technical help guiding them on how to help their children.

The study aims at enhancing EFL children's verbal practices outside classroom contexts by guiding parents of the children with supplementary bilingual videos (video materials & explainer videos). Thus, the study's result indicated that supplementary bilingual videos (video material and explainer videos) are effective means of fostering verbal interaction between parents and their children. In addition, the children's interaction in classroom contexts remarkably increased due to their regular practices with their parents at home for what they have learned in the classroom. Moreover, the parents of the children express their satisfaction with the progress that their children record in a short period, reflecting their positive attitude towards the effectiveness of utilizing these supplementary videos (video material and explainer videos) as supportive means. For example, the children got the confidence to quickly describe different objects with various colors and places, such as "green book on the table", a blue pen in the bag, my brother between my Dad and Mam, etc.

Based on the obtained results, it recommends that EFL teachers who teach EFL children as starters' should utilize supportive means, particularly supplementary videos helping parents whose English background is at least intermediate, to enhance home spoken practice and expand language practice outside classroom contexts. For further investigation, the study recommends that instead of a four-week analysis, the study should last at least three to six months to verify the significance of support for parental involvement with video materials and explainer videos for children's development in speaking.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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