
X-raying the Fundamentals of Socialization and the Role of Family in Supporting Children's Language Skills

Meshach Terseer Ugbede

Benue State University Makurdi, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Socialization within familiar contexts profoundly influences children's language skills. In this lightening study, we delve deep into the complex nuances of socialization and the pivotal role families play in a child's development of language skills. Through the use of X-ray technology, we can uncover the fundamental building blocks of socialization and how they contribute to a child's growth and success. With a clear and objective tone, we examine the various ways in which families can support and nurture their children's language skills, providing them with the tools they need to thrive in both their personal and academic lives. This research sheds light on the importance of strong familial support and highlights the lasting significance it can have on a child's development. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms through which family interactions help children's linguistic development and educational success.

KEYWORDS: *Children, family, language skills, socialization.*

INTRODUCTION

Plato said, "Man is a political animal", which means man cannot stand and fulfill all he needs alone. He is a difficult being but needs the assistance of others to meet his needs. The human infant comes into the world as a biological organism with animal needs. He is gradually molded into a social being and he learns social ways of acting and feeling. Without this process of molding, the society could not continue itself, nor could culture exist, nor could the individual become a person. This process of molding is called 'Socialization'.

Socialization is a lifelong process that shapes a person's functional behaviour to conform to the norms of the culture or society in which they live. It is influenced by a variety of factors, including family, formal and informal social groups, education, upbringing, and so on. Venelin and Silva (2022) maintained that socialization aids in the learning, inheritance, preservation, and transmission of these values across time. Every society creates its own culture by upholding and adhering to norms, practices, values, traditions, social roles, symbols, and languages. Additionally, it aids in his acquisition of new habits and abilities necessary for proper integration into community life. Stated differently, socialization fosters a particular set of values that aid in an individual's acceptance by society.

The process of socialization, on the other hand, keeps culture and society alive. It is not merely a goal in and of itself; rather, it focuses on the patterns, strategies, and mechanisms that society utilizes to impose norms, standards, and values on people to shape and govern them. It has to do

with teaching young men how to acquire, internalize, and pass on societal norms, behaviours, and customs to the next generation. It also helps to prepare them for active participation in a variety of social structures and relations. These processes involved in socialization rely hugely on verbal and non-verbal communication and a particular emphasis is placed on the learning and acquisition of language and communication skills.

Language skills to Ugbede (2024) are communication skills that help you convey your ideas without uncertainty or ambiguity. In essence, language skills enable people to convey their ideas to others with clarity and precision. It begins with sounds and gestures and, gradually, words and sentences. Language skills support your child's ability to communicate, understand, and express their feelings and also serve as the foundation for reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills in children as they progress through their early years.

Parents, as socializers, impart values and cultural standards through personality development events. As a result, individuals become active elicitors of parental behavior regardless of social and environmental consequences (Doan, MacDonald, & Swaminathan, 2023). Within the family unit, socialization begins early and significantly influences children's cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development. Children often copy the behavior they observe in others, but they are also active participants in the socialization process and are responsible for making choices about their behavior.

CONCEPT OF SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is a process not an act. It refers to the process whereby an individual cross-pollinates ideas and gets the useful harvested. It begins at birth and continues throughout life. Recent studies on socialization view it as an interactional and bidirectional mechanism, opposing the traditional paradigm of private norm internalization (Montiegel, 2023). Internalization of norms is a lifelong process shaped by parents, teachers, peers, media, and religious ideals, customs, and penalties. Ozokeraha and Omotegbona (2020) suggest that socialization is the process by which human beings as material organisms living with other material organisms learn to pattern their behavior and adapt it to the ways of acting that are considered appropriate to the society in which they live.

Otite and Ogionwo (1981) defined socialization as "An interactional process whereby a person's behavior is modified to conform to expectations held by members of the group to which he belongs. In consonance with the above definition, our contemporary society has evolved greatly in diverse ways beyond the latter centuries and individuals in the society have adopted these different dimensions of doing things in other to fit in our present society. That is to say, individuals need to relearn certain things in a more technologically advanced way like the use of ICT and internet gadgets. This stage of socialization is called reverse socialization. Relatedly, Zaria and Tsebee (2014) stated that reverse socialization occurs when the younger generation transmits cultural knowledge to its elders. As a result of rapid social change, (ICT) elders' knowledge may become obsolete so the young have to socialize with the elders, especially in youth culture.

To Venelin and Silva (2022) socialization is a process of social control. This means an individual leaving prior comportment to assimilate new ones as an explicit way to transform an individual to become a useful member of the society to which he belongs. This process of socialization is known as re-socialization. Re-socialization to Zaria and Tsebee (2014) is a process of discarding former

behavior patterns and accepting new ones as part of a transition in one's life. And there is nothing wrong with that – throughout life, a person never ceases to learn or reject previous behaviour patterns and values. Re-socialization can be a very intense experience because it includes detachment (Tumbaach, 2021).

On the other hand, socialization is a complex process through which individuals acquire the norms, values, and behaviors of their society. It plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's identity, sense of self, and understanding of the world around them. In other words, it encompasses the processes of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors necessary to function within society. The socialization of an individual is essential in shaping the social structure. Through education, society transfers their knowledge, skills, values, and patterns of behaviour to younger generations. This way knowledge, self-preservation, and continuity are guaranteed (Venelin & Silva, 2022).

Zaria & Tsebee (2014) opine that, socialization affects the overall cultural practices of the society, and it also shapes our self-images. It helps in the transformation of an individual from a biological entity or nature. Through socialization, an individual can relate to a group and be useful to the society as a whole. Impliedly, if one gives birth to a child and places the child among the pigs or other animals, the child will behave like the pigs. So, one of the functions of socialization is to make an individual learn how to behave in a socially acceptable way in conformity with the expectations of the group or society he belongs. Acquiring these skills, norms, attitudes, and beliefs acceptable in society helps him or her fit in whatever condition that they find themselves in thereby making them good ambassadors of society.

CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language skills are the capacities that enable you to express your studies coherently and communicate with others. These skills give structure and applicability to the information you wish to convey to the philanthropist. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are four essential skills that comprise introductory language faculty. Ugbede (2024) noted that language skills support your child's ability to communicate, understand, and express their feelings and also serve as the foundation for reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills in children as they progress through their early years. These skills, when used together, are co-dependent on each other. For instance, if listening is an input of information, speaking is a form of affair where the followership can fit, ask questions, or give inputs after listening to the communication. Relatedly, Zaria and Tsebee (2014) note that teaching language and other cognitive skills, the internalization of cultural norms, and values, establishment of emotional ties, etc is known as primary socialization and it begins with the family.

Concept of Family

The family is the smallest unit in the society. It is the smallest unit of human organizations that is made up of the father, mother, and children as members. Members of the family are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Members of the family have rights and responsibilities towards one another and the family unit (Garba, 2013).

Radhika (2024) opines that family members are regarded as primary support systems. Parents are regarded as the first and foremost teachers of their children. They are vested with the authority and

responsibility of making provision of information among their children in terms of various areas, making decisions for them, guiding them in the right direction, and promoting their well-being and goodwill. The individuals, belonging to all communities, categories, and backgrounds hone their knowledge and skills and prepare themselves to promote the well-being of their families. Within the family, the individuals must form positive viewpoints and reinforce cordial and amiable terms and relationships with each other. It suffices to say that, in a family where there is disunity, discord, disobedience, disrespect and all kinds of unacceptable behaviours exude, the kind of socialization that will take place will be ill-socialization. Families are exhorted to have a harmonious family where showers of love, unity, and understanding abound.

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical perspectives on socialization will be utilized for this work: Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

Sociocultural theory by Lev Vygotsky (1978)

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions and cultural influence in shaping cognitive development. To Vygotsky, children learn through social interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as parents, teachers, and peers. These interactions provide the scaffolding that supports children's learning and helps them internalize cultural practices and knowledge. Vygotsky also highlights the role of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what a child can do independently and what they can do with the help of others. By working within the ZPD, adults can provide appropriate levels of support and guidance to facilitate children's learning and development.

It is suggestible to state that, the guidance of parents and siblings is the epicenter in the socialization of the child, as children believe in most of the things said to them by the adult members of the family. With this, children who are birthed in a socially and well-behaved family tend to behave in a more acceptable way than those whose parental upbringing was poor. The pivotal role played by members of society is correcting certain wrong behaviours of the child impacts them negatively as it is a stepping stone for them to acquire certain skills, norms, and attitudes that are useful to them and the society at large.

Family dynamics play a central role in Vygotsky's theory of socialization. Families serve as the primary socializing agents for children and provide the foundation for their cognitive and emotional development. Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in scaffolding children's learning, modeling appropriate behaviors, and transmitting cultural values and norms. Family relationships, routines, and communication patterns all contribute to children's socialization experiences and shape their understanding of the world. For example, a warm and nurturing family environment is associated with positive outcomes for children's social and emotional development, while negative or dysfunctional family dynamics can have detrimental effects on children's well-being.

Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory offers a broader perspective on socialization, emphasizing the importance of considering the multiple levels of influence that shape children's development. Bronfenbrenner identifies four interconnected systems that influence children's experiences: the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem

includes the immediate environment in which children interact, such as their family, school, and peer group. The mesosystem refers to the connections between these different environments, while the exosystem involves external influences that indirectly affect children, such as the media or community resources. Finally, the macro system encompasses the broader cultural and societal norms that shape children's socialization experiences.

Family dynamics are a key component of the microsystem in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Families provide children with their first and most intimate socialization experiences, shaping their sense of self, values, and beliefs. The quality of family relationships, as well as the dynamics of parenting styles and communication patterns, can have profound effects on children's development. For example, a supportive and nurturing family environment can enhance children's self-esteem and resilience, while a hostile or neglectful family environment can contribute to emotional and behavioral problems.

Both Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory highlight the importance of considering the social and cultural contexts in which socialization occurs. These frameworks emphasize the dynamic interactions between individuals and their environments, highlighting the interconnectedness of individual development and societal influences. By understanding the role of family dynamics in children's development through these theoretical perspectives, we can gain insights into how to support positive socialization experiences and promote healthy development.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory offer valuable insights into the process of socialization and the role of family dynamics in children's development. These frameworks help us understand how social interactions, cultural influences, and environmental factors shape children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. By considering the multiple levels of influence that shape children's experiences.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALIZATION IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

As earlier stated, socialization is a lifelong process where an individual acquires the knowledge, language, social skills, and values in both society and culture. It is a process where the individual learns the different social statuses, roles, and rights, obligations, and values of society. In the socialization process, family and close relatives are the first and most important agents who introduce us to the skills and knowledge of language in children. These close family members are the first people who carry out the process of primary socialization. Children are actively and consistently engaged in the process of acquiring languages, and the process is shaped and affected by communicative interaction with people. Children need to keep practicing, applying, and producing language with others to make sure that they do not forget what they have learned in their language learning.

The opportunity to talk and listen is crucial in maintaining and developing children's language. As noted by Aristotle the father of epistemological realism in Shishim and Apenda (2010) consider the mind of a child as a "tabula rasa" that is a clean slate or empty slate on which knowledge is to be written. Supporting this view, Plato in Akinbote, Oduolowu, and Lawal (2001) asserts that the process of education should start as early as possible since it is during the early childhood period that any impression which one desires to communicate is most easily 'stamped and taken'. This

implies that, when a child is young, his brain has the highest capability to absorb and store massive information compared to when he grows up. If there are few things (for example, the knowledge of languages) taught to him during this period it might affect his future potential and the benefit of learning will become less.

The family must therefore live up to expectations in socializing the child correctly, by exposing the child to good ideas and ideals. The home can contribute greatly to juvenile delinquencies such as drunkenness, smoking, drug addiction, and a host of others (Zaria & Tsebee, 2014). It is pertinent therefore that the family play an active and positive role in the correct socialization of the child by giving the child the necessary character training as well as language skills development to make him or her a useful member of society.

LANGUAGE SKILLS AND SOCIALIZATION

Language skills and socialization are very crucial in the life of a child, and these can be enhanced through the following:

Communication skills: Language is fundamental to social interaction. Children who develop strong language skills are better equipped to communicate their needs, express their thoughts, and understand others. Bornstein et al. (2018) noted that early language skills are predictive of social competence in preschool years.

Peer relationships: Language competence facilitates better peer relationships. Children with advanced language skills can negotiate, collaborate, and resolve conflicts more effectively. Vandell et al. (2022) opined that interaction with peers provides children with diverse linguistic inputs and social contexts that are crucial for pragmatic language development, such as understanding turn-taking, conversational norms, and slang.

Emotional regulation: Language also helps children articulate their emotions and understand the emotions of others, which is crucial for emotional regulation and empathy. Salmon et al. (2023) noted that children who are better at articulating their emotions through language tend to have better emotional regulation skills and are more adept at navigating social situations.

THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The relationship between family dynamics, language skills, and the socialization of children is a significant area of study. Families play a crucial role in the early development of language, which in turn influences children's social skills and their ability to interact with others. These roles include the followings:

Parental Interaction

Early language exposure primarily occurs through interactions with parents and caregivers. Research indicates that the quantity and quality of language spoken at home directly affect children's vocabulary and grammar skills. Ramírez-Esparza et al. (2022) stated that regular, and meaningful interactions between parents and children, often referred to as conversational turns, are essential for language development. These interactions help children learn new words and understand the rules of language.

Socioeconomic factors

Socioeconomic status (SES) can influence the linguistic environment at home. Higher SES families often provide more diverse and complex language inputs. Pace et al. (2023) found that children from higher SES backgrounds receive more diverse and complex linguistic input at home, which supports more robust language development compared to their lower SES peers. This study also noted that interventions focused on enhancing language-rich interactions in lower SES families can mitigate some of these disparities.

Technology and screen time

The increasing use of digital devices has introduced new variables into the language development landscape. A study by Madigan et al. (2020) explored the significance of screen time on language development, finding that excessive screen time, especially without parental engagement, can negatively affect children's language skills. However, co-viewing and discussing content with children can turn screen time into a more positive experience for language development.

Bilingualism

Socialization in bilingual environments supports language development in both languages. Children benefit from regular exposure and practice in social contexts involving both languages. Bilingual children often have better metalinguistic awareness and cognitive flexibility. Similarly, De Houwer (2021) emphasizes that consistent exposure to both languages in a supportive environment is crucial for balanced bilingual development.

Reading aloud and storytelling

Reading aloud and storytelling are powerful tools for language development. They introduce children to new vocabulary, narrative structures, and complex language forms. A study by Nyhout and O'Neill (2020) demonstrated that children who regularly read have better language skills and are more prepared for academic success. The interactive nature of reading, where parents ask questions and encourage children to discuss the story, further enhances language development.

Interactive play

Interactive play provides a natural and engaging context for language use and development. Through play, children learn new words, practice language skills, and develop social communication abilities. Interactive play fosters both expressive and receptive language skills by creating natural opportunities for dialogue and narrative building for children.

Modeling social behavior

Families model social behaviors and language use in various contexts, teaching children how to navigate social norms and expectations. Families model social behavior and language use, teaching children how to navigate social norms. Laible et al. (2022) confirmed that children learn social norms and behaviors by observing and imitating their parents' communication styles.

Creating a supportive communication environment

A supportive family environment that encourages open and responsive communication helps children develop social confidence. Farrant et al. (2021) note that children from families who

engage in more open and supportive communication tend to have better social skills and are more resilient in social settings.

Conflict resolution

Families teach children how to handle conflicts through language. Effective communication strategies taught by parents can help children manage disputes and develop problem-solving skills. A study by McCoy et al. (2020) found that children who are taught to use language to resolve conflicts constructively tend to have better peer relationships and fewer behavioral problems.

CONCLUSION

The family's role in developing children's language skills is multifaceted and critically important. Socialization is the process by which children learn the norms, values, behaviors, and skills needed to function effectively in society. The family is the primary agent of socialization, playing a crucial role in the early development of language skills. Socialization is a critical component of child language development, providing essential contexts for acquiring, practicing, and refining linguistic skills. Interactions with parents, peers, siblings, and educators all contribute uniquely to language growth. Recent studies underscore the importance of family in supporting children's language skills; and quality social interactions and highlight the influence of socioeconomic factors, digital media, and bilingual environments on language development. Through reading, conversational engagement, interactive play, and consideration of socioeconomic factors, families can create a rich linguistic environment that supports robust language development. These strategies, supported by recent research, accentuate the importance of intentional and responsive interactions in nurturing children's language abilities to drive academically, culturally, and socially.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends thus:

- i. Educators should encourage frequent, meaningful, and responsive interactions between parents and children to foster language development.
- ii. Families should expose children to diverse linguistic and cultural experiences to broaden their understanding and use of language in different social contexts.
- iii. Families should create a nurturing environment that promotes open communication and provides positive reinforcement for language use.
- iv. Implement interventions and provide resources that support language-rich environments for children from lower SES backgrounds. Encourage community programs that promote language development through parent education and engagement.
- v. Parents should incorporate regular reading sessions and storytelling into daily routines. Ask questions and engage children in discussions about the stories to enhance comprehension and expressive language skills.

REFERENCES

- i. Akinbote, O., Oduolowu, E, & Lawal, B. (2001). *Primary and primary education in Nigeria: A basic text*. Stirling-Horden Ltd.
- ii. Bornstein, M. H., Hahn, C.-S., Putnick, D. L., & Suwalsky, J. T. D. (2018). Stability of core language skill across the first decade of life in children at biological and social risk. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 59(7), 744-754.
- iii. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- iv. De Houwer, A. (2021). Two or more languages in early childhood: Some general points and practical recommendations. *Child Development Perspectives*, 15(1), 1-5.
- v. Doan, S., Macdonald, S., & Swaminathan, K. (2023). The socialization of positive emotions: Implications for physical health and psychological adjustment. *Mental Health & Prevention*, 200272.
- vi. Farrant, B. M., Devine, T. A. J., Maybery, M. T., & Fletcher, J. (2021). The importance of parent-child communication in early childhood for the development of social skills. *Early Child Development and Care*, 191(6), 833-845.
- vii. Garba, F.N. (2013). *Man and his environment*. Prosperous Prints and Publishing House.
- viii. Laible, D., Carlo, G., & Roesch, S. (2022). Parent-child dialogue and the development of social understanding and prosocial behavior. *Developmental Psychology*, 58(5), 909-920.
- ix. Madigan, S., Browne, D., Racine, N., Mori, C., & Tough, S. (2021). Association between screen time and children's performance on a developmental screening test. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 175(4), 377-384
- x. McCoy, D. C., Zuilkowski, S. S., & Yoshikawa, H. (2020). Parenting and conflict resolution: Implications for child development. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 34(7), 819-828.
- xi. Montiegel, K. (2023). Peer socialization in an oral preschool classroom. *Language & communication*, 89, 63-77.
- xii. Nyhout, A., & O'Neill, D. K. (2020). Storybooks and language development: The role of genre and illustrations in storybooks. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1651. [Link](<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01651>)
- xiii. Otite, O, & Ogionwo, W. (1981). *An Introduction to sociological studies*. Heinemann Educational Book.
- xiv. Ozokeraha C.F.R & Omotegbona P. O. (2020). The impact of socialization on academic performance in Delta State Polytechnic Otefe, Oghara. *Innovative Journal of Science*, 2 (2) 211-218. <https://Journals.Rasetass.Org/Index.Php/Ijs>

-
- xv. Pace, A., Luo, R., Hirsh-Pasek, K., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2023). Socioeconomic status and language development: The role of language input and interventions. *Child Development, 94*(2), 123-139.
- xvi. Radhika, K. (2022). Understanding the meaning and significance of family. <https://www.Researchgate.Net/Publication/359920029>
- xvii. Ramírez-Esparza, N., García-Sierra, A., & Kuhl, P. K. (2022). The impact of early language exposure on language processing skills: Evidence from conversational turns. *Developmental Science, 25*(4), E13245.
- xviii. Salmon, K., O'Kearney, R., Reese, E., & Fortune, C. (2023). Language skills and emotional regulation: Longitudinal relations from early childhood to adolescence. *Emotion, 23*(1), 34-48.
- xix. Shishima, D. S, & Apenda, A. Z. (2010). *Moral philosophy and discipline*. Selfers Publications.
- xx. Tumbaach, D. (2021). *Role of education in socialization*. Retrieved From Online Note Bank: <https://Onlinenotebank.Wordpress.Com/Author/Writertumbaach>
- xxi. Ugbede, M. T. (2024). Exploring the efficacy of multimodal educational materials in developing comprehensive language skills in children: A focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies, 10*(2), 12-22.
- xxii. Vandell, D. L., Belsky, J., & Burchinal, M. (2022). The impact of early child care on peer relations at school entry: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 78*, 101344.
- xxiii. Venelin T. & Silva V. (2022). The role of education in socialization of an individual. Available From: <https://www.Researchgate.Net/Publication/360397874>
- xxiv. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- xxv. Zaria, I. L. & Tsebee, M. (2014). *Socialization and other issues in social studies*. Eagle prints.