Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR)
www.thedssr.com

ISSN Online: 3007-3154
ISSN Print: 3007-3146

DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Vol. 3 No. 5 (May) (2025)

An Analysis of Mind in Pre-schoolers Through Social Constructivism

Sawaira Maula Dad
Mphil linguistics, City University of Science and Technology Peshawar
Email: sawairamuladad@gmail.com

Muhammad Sohail
Mphil linguistics, City University of Science and Technology Peshawar
Email: ms9060477@gmail.com

Abstract
This study is based on Vygotsky's constructivism theory. Vygotsky constructivism theory is about social interaction, the theory considers learning as a social and communicative process. The study aims to highlight the importance of social interaction and application of different techniques and strategies that help preschoolers during their learning. The scaffolding technique within Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) helps in cognitive development of the child making the learning process more active. This study also highlights how social constructivism theory enhances the cognitive ability of a child and emphasizes that social factors enhance the cognitive ability of pre-school children. Case studies and systematic participant observations were employed in this study and this research is qualitative in nature. Vygotsky theory of social constructivism helps the students to enhance their cognitive abilities.

Keywords: social constructivism, scaffolding, the Zone of Proximal Development, systematic participant observation, cognitive abilities, preschoolers

Introduction

Many arguments regarding how children comprehend their cultural, physiological, and social world have been presented. These theories of the human mind have been linked with socialization (Carpendale & Lewis., 2004). One of the known theories of Vygotsky is also concerned with child cognitive development through social advancement. A child social evolution arises through interaction including child exposure to the world and their communicative relation with the people regarding their beliefs and experiences (Topçiu & Myftiu., 2015).

There are many biological, sociological, and physiological factors which affect the development of the human mind. The personality of Childs' mind is also greatly influenced by these components. The social context is different for every individual therefore, the level of development of mental physique is different from individual to individual. The level of advancement is reached only when an individual is operative in interaction with these factors (Topçiu & Myftiu., 2015).

As it is seen, that the environment of schools for the preschoolers plays a significant role to promote social interaction among children. The dominant theory contributes to and fore-ground the function of social elements in understanding the human mind is Vygotsky theory of social interaction. His notion

Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR)
www.thedssr.com

ISSN Online: 3007-3154
ISSN Print: 3007-3146

DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Vol. 3 No. 5 (May) (2025)

zone of proximal development and cognitive system should be recognized and should be practically applied to highlight that how child will successfully pass this phase (Topçiu & Myftiu., 2015).

Statement

The research endeavors to spotlight the significance of social factors in the development of the human mind.

Research Question

1.How does social constructivism theory helps on development of cognitive learning ability of pre-school children?
2.What are the social factors that influence the child's cognitive learning abilities in pre-school children?

Objectives

1.To highlight social constructivism theory enhances the cognitive ability of a child.
2.To accentuate that social factors enhance the cognitive ability of pre-school children.

Literature review

"Today's students have taken to social networking like fish to water; yet, from our perspectives, there is little social interaction taking place in many of today's classrooms from kindergarten to college." Hurst, B., Wallace, R., & Nixon, S. B. (2013). The Impact of Social Interaction on Student Learning. Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts, 52(4), 5.
"Pretend play with peers has been hypothesized to augment the social and social-cognitive skills of preschool children. Two alternative mechanisms for these effects are proposed: first, out-of-play negotiations with play partners about roles, object properties, and actions; and second, the actual enactment of pretend episodes." Doyle, A. B., & Connolly, J. (1989). Negotiation and enactment in social pretend play: Relations to social acceptance and social cognition. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 4(3), 289-302.
"Children learn best from rich, responsive social interactions with other people. These interactions allow children and adults to share attention and build bonds. In those interactions, adults can scaffold children's learning." ECLKC (Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center).
"Conversations are a primary tool for language development in preschool classrooms. The Conversation Station can be used as an effective activity to promote language and vocabulary development in preschool classrooms." Bond, M., & Wasik, B. (2009). Conversation Stations: Promoting Language Development in Young Children. Early Childhood Education Journal, 36(6).

Theoretic framework, Main concepts in sociocultural theory:

The most known representative of the social-cognitivist theory is Vygotsky. The focus of his work is social interaction. And impact of social interaction on individual." Human learning means a specific social nature and a process through which children enter gradually into the intellectual life of people surrounding them" (Lev. S. Vygotskiji,1934).
According to Vygotsky (1978, Cited Lantolf 2000), the sociocultural environment

Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR)
www.thedssr.com

ISSN Online: 3007-3154
ISSN Print: 3007-3146

DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Vol. 3 No. 5 (May) (2025)

confronts children with a diverse set of tasks and questions. In the preliminary stages, the child is completely dependent on other people, especially on parents, who initiate his decision while instructing him what to do, how to do it and what not to do. Vygotsky (1978 cited wretch 1985) declares that the child receives the knowledge initially through the contacts and interaction with people and then assimilates this knowledge adding the personal value in it.

This passage from social to personal qualities, is not a simple imitation but a transfer of what has been learned from the interaction to the personal values. Vygotsky admits that this is what happens in schools. Children do not only copy what has been offered by the teachers but also transform them during the learning process. According to this theory, the student teacher interaction has a dynamic nature and learning happens because of this interaction.

StetSonko noted, "Learning is not just acquisition of knowledge but also a process of active engagement with the world to transform one's own condition and society" (Stetsonko,2016). According to Kirshner and Whitson, "learning is enhanced when student engage in meaningful social interaction with more knowledgeable peers or teachers" (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997). Smagorinsky stated," Literacy is not an individual achievement but a social practice that emerges through participation in meaningful activities within a community" (Smagorinsky,2001). One of the most important contributions of Vygotsky's constructivist theory is Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD):

Lantolf (2002), Wertch (1985) and Shayer (2002), admit that Vygotsky introduced the ZPD concept because he did not approve of the way the children's intellectual abilities were being evaluated. Vygotsky introduced the concept of ZPD, which he defines as: "the distance between a child's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem- solving under adult guidance or in cooperation with more capable peers" (Vygotsky,1978, p.86). Vygotsky believed that effective instruction and scaffolding should be provided within the learner's ZPD to promote their development.

Schwartz and Tsang examined the application of ZPD in educational contexts. According to them, "the ZPD is dynamic space of cognitive development, where learners actively engage in challenging activities with appropriate guidance and support" (Schwartz and Tsang,2014, p.167).

Scaffolding:

Vygotsky introduced the concept of scaffolding in education. Vygotsky work on sociocultural theory and cognitive development has had a significant impact on educational Psychology. According to Vygotsky, Scaffolding refers to the Support and guidance provided by a more knowledgeable individual to help a learner accomplish a task or acquire new knowledge or skills. The scaffolding process involves breaking down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable steps, and gradually reducing support as the learner becomes more competent and independent.

Wood, Burner, and Ross describe scaffolding as a process in which a more knowledgeable individual provides temporary support to learners to help them out to accomplish their task. They state that "Scaffolding consists of the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some tasks so that the child can

Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR)
www.thedssr.com

ISSN Online: 3007-3154
ISSN Print: 3007-3146

DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Vol. 3 No. 5 (May) (2025)

concentrate on the difficult skill she is in the process of acquiring" (Wood, Burner & Ross 1976, p.90).
Vygotsky's followers bring a set of means through which can mention the usage of the inner language by children. Especially children in preschool and elementary school can benefit a lot from it. According to lurias (1979), the inner language has another important function: it helps the children fix their outside and mental behavior (Berk& Winsler,1995); Galperin, 1992). On the other hand, the symbolic or dramatic game, which is present during the preschool age, plays a special role in the Vygotsky theory of learning and development.
A more specific study on the supportive scaffold has been presented by Donovan and Smolkin (2002), who analyze this concept in children's writing. They have researched the role of distinct levels of the supportive scaffold in children's understanding and in showing their knowledge. Tasks are ranked from those that need minimal support to those that need intermediary and elevated level of support.
According to Rogoff (1990 in Donato, 1994), during the application of scaffolding, the expert should be active and attentive. He needs to continuously review his help and decide when he needs to modify and move it.

Methodology:
It has been investigated that the philosophy, curriculum and programs that educate for pre-school class in the city of Nowshera are founded to respond to the tough questions posed in this study. Case studies and systematic participant observation were the methods employed in this study. The research is qualitative in nature.

Participants:
The participants that participated in the study are the students of kindergarten in the city of Nowshera.

Measurements:
Case no.1:
During the Math class the teacher asked some of the students to put the different geometric shapes according to the size, shape, and color. Three of the students assemble the shapes correctly according to their size, shape, and color. Whereas one of the students named Ahmed put the square shape with the rectangular shape.
The teacher asked Ahmed to notice the shapes and again assemble these geometric shapes. Ahmed repeats the activity and observes that the rectangular shape is a bit more enlarged and different in length from the square shape. The teacher then provides the students with some sticks and asks him to make the shapes with the help of these sticks.
The teacher question Ahmed that, does he noticed any difference while making the shapes? He replies yes, the shape of rectangle requires more sticks as compared to the square shape because square shape sides are all equal in length but that of rectangular shape are not equal in length.
Afterwards, Ahmed again revises this activity with the help of the model. And now he has completely understood the concept of these two shapes, and he is now able to identify different objects of these shapes in his classroom and outside the

Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR)
www.thedssr.com

ISSN Online: 3007-3154
ISSN Print: 3007-3146

DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Vol. 3 No. 5 (May) (2025)

classroom. As a result, what he was not able to do without help, is now able to do it on his own.

Case First:
The girl whose name starts with A.Y was not able to write her full name. She can only write the first letter of her name. When her teacher asked her, why are you not able to able to sign your name? She replied that my name is exceptionally long, it contains a lot of alphabets, and I cannot remember the right order of the alphabets.
To construct a "responsive scaffolding" the teacher used a scaffolding technique.
At first: A model written with capital alphabets is introduced to her.
Secondly: with the help of this model, she would try to write her name.
When she started writing her name, the teacher only put those letters in the model which was contained in her name. When the student successfully wrote her the teacher added more letters to the model.
In the third step she started to write individual alphabets of hers by simply combining the marks. In the fourth step she would simply write her name as identified in the model.
Finally, the teacher helped the student to remember the letters in the following order as A like apple, F like fruits, m like mango etc. After thorough practice in school and at home, the student was able to write her complete name.

Case no.2:
There was a child in the class whose name starts with L.F who was not able to write the letter 'g.' To make the student learn write the letter 'g,' the teacher held his hand and joined the dots that she had written on the paper for him. In this way the child repeatedly exercises this model and finally he learned to write letter "g." She told the teacher now I can write the letter "g" without your help so do not hold my hand. The teacher as a result congratulated and appreciated her hard work.

Case no.3:
A child with the initials A.S who has not joined the school yet was asked to participate in the activity in which the students were asked to draw a diagram of their own choice of pet. While looking at the other kids performing the activity the child A.S started weeping. When the teacher enquired why he was weeping the child replied that he is not able to draw any of the pet diagram.
The teacher first presented the model to the child. Then explained the drawing process and asked the student to draw out a circle. Now inside this head circle draw two small circles to show the eyes and one circle in the very center part to show the nose.
Below the nose draw a letter "u" time to show the mouth. And draw a rectangular shape on the sides of the circle to show the ears. The teacher also taught the student how to draw the rest part of the body. After repeatedly doing this activity, the child was able to draw a diagram of a dog without any sort of assistance.

Analysis Of The Data:
In the above cases the teachers used different scaffolding procedures. The teacher provided such a friendly environment or conditions in which the students were helped to perform certain activities to enhance their cognitive abilities. Various

ISSN Online: 3007-3154
ISSN Print: 3007-3146

observations were made. The students were provided with various models and were explained to them thoroughly. The students were given different instructions and suggestions by the teachers.
At first the teacher helped the students according to the child's capability to learn. For example, as in first case the teacher helped the students to learn the difference between the rectangular and square shape by asking, he/she to draw it with the help of the sticks and through communication by using oral language to interact with the students. In this manner the teacher uses a scaffolding technique to develop a child's cognitive ability. In all the given cases the teacher used different scaffolding procedures to increase child learning ability or cognition. In all the cases it is observed that through social interaction the child can reach the level of scaffolding.

Conclusion:

Vygotsky theory of social constructivism helps the students to enhance their cognitive abilities. By practicing Scaffolding procedure for preschoolers' proofs that this technique is immensely helpful in improving the learning abilities of the students.
Zone of proximal development which is an intermediate step in scaffolding is the base of scaffolding. Secondly, by repeating the activities and the social interaction between the students and the teachers showed that the social factors had a profound influence on the mind of the preschoolers.

References

Stetsenko, A. (2016). The transformative mind: Expanding Vygotsky's approach to development and education. Cambridge University Press.
Kirshner, D., & Whitson, J. A. (1997). Situated cognition: Social, semiotic, and psychological perspectives. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Smagorinsky, P. (2001). If meaning is constructed, what is it made from? Toward a cultural theory of reading. Review of Educational Research, 71(1), 133-169.
Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.
Schwartz, D. L., & Tsang, J. M. (2014). The role of the ZPD in educational technology research and development. Educational Psychologist, 49(2), 104-116.
Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem-solving. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17(2), 89-100.
Hurst, B., Wallace, R., & Nixon, S. B. (2013). The Impact of Social Interaction on Student Learning. Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts, 52(4), 5.
Doyle, A. B., & Connolly, J. (1989). Negotiation and enactment in social pretend play: Relations to social acceptance and social cognition. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 4(3), 289-302.
ECLKC (Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center).
Bond, M., & Wasik, B. (2009). Conversation Stations: Promoting Language Development in Young Children. Early Childhood Education Journal, 36(6).