

Lenses and Lessons: Using three different research perspectives in early childhood education research

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In contemporary Western research, collaboration is held in high esteem. This developing practice is challenging particularly for researchers who follow varying theoretical approaches. However although a challenging endeavour, when viewing the one data set with different lenses, there are various lessons that can be shared. A key aspect of this paper is involved researchers' different analytical perspectives in one data set to learn more about each other's research insights, rather than become instant expert in other's approaches. The interview data reported in this paper originates from a larger study researching parents' experience of using early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Australia. Here we analyse and report on two shared interview excerpts and use three different research lenses for analysis; phenomenographic study, conversational analysis and cultural-historical theory. The finding of this paper demonstrates that applying different lenses provide different interpretations, including strengths, limitations and opportunities. In this paper we argue that collaborative research practices enhance our understanding of varying research approaches and the scope, quality, translation of research and the researchers' capacity are enhanced.

Key words: early childhood, research perspectives, phenomenography, conversation analysis, cultural-historical theory

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Introduction

There is increasing interest amongst qualitative researchers in exploring the prospects and impacts of applying different research perspectives to the one data set to enhance understanding of the selected research topic. This enables strengths and limitations of diverse research perspectives to be examined. There is no doubt that using different methodological approaches with the same data often allows for a rich in depth interpretation from differing perspectives [11; 6]. However, the choice of research perspective, singular or multiple, will also influence and shape the research findings and how these may be used. As Honan et al., [11] concluded, the application of different theoretical and analytical approaches can constitute the subjects quite differently and "radically influence" (p. 9) findings from one data set, an observation supported by others who have examined multiple research perspectives [1; 30].

While the benefits are clear, it is generally recognised that the application of multiple research perspectives adds complexity to the research process. As Collier et al., [6] argue, using different lenses, the one piece of data can be interpreted in diverse ways, which may lead to different conclusions and create additional challenges for researchers working together to understand the phenomenon. However, there is also potential to learn more about the phenomenon under investigation. Abes provokes us to look beyond the differences found in analysis to source the limitations inherent within theoretical perspectives reminding us "all theoretical perspectives that guide research are incomplete" [1, p. 141]. She also suggests that by bringing together several perspectives that are conflicting, novel ways of understanding the data may be presented "leading to rich new research results and possibilities" [p. 141]. Applying this to research training, Slaughter et al., [24] suggest interpretively using a variety of methodological traditions might also be useful to novice researchers and their mentors.

In Australia, a key driver for exploring multiple research perspectives is the emphasis on collaboration in educational and social research to address national research priorities. This is underpinned by the belief that inter-disciplinary and multiple methodological approaches can enhance the scope, quality and translation of research while also building researcher capacity. This is, in fact, the context for this paper. All of the researchers involved in this paper are members of the *Excellence in Research Early Years Education Collaborative Research Network* (CRN). The CRN is a three-year initiative, funded by the Australian Government, drawing together a mix of researchers and doctoral students from Charles Sturt University, Queensland University of Technology and Monash University, to form Australia's largest network of researchers in early years education. The aim of the CRN is to build the capacity of early years education researchers at all career stages, while progressing a cumulative national evidence base to inform policy and practice in Australia and internationally.

This collaborative paper is the result of a small group of CRN researchers, coming together to learn more about each other's research perspectives. The main purpose of this paper is to explore the practical application of three qualitative research perspectives to a single data set, to consider what each perspective offers and how these different perspectives might work together or not as the case may be. We seek to achieve this purpose by applying three different research perspectives to two shared interview excerpts; the research perspectives are: Phenomenography [14; 17]; Conversation analysis [20] and Cultural-Historical theory [26; 27; 28].

Three different research perspectives

1. Phenomenography: The sum of the parts

Phenomenography is most frequently described as a research specialisation aimed at the "mapping of the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of, and various phenomena in, the world around them" [15, p. 31]. Developed by Swedish educational researchers in the seventies, phenomenography adopts what is known as a 'second-order perspective' and is concerned with the world as it appears to people. However, distinguishing phenomenography from other qualitative research methods, the research aim is twofold: (i) to identify the different meanings that people ascribe to the same object or experience and (ii) to make visible how different conceptions, meanings or ways of experiencing relate to each other and the phenomenon of interest [2; 17].

While the phenomenographic knowledge interest is a *conception or way of experiencing something*, the objective is to look at "collective human experience of the phenomena holistically" [2, p. 323]; this is another distinguishing feature of this research approach. The foundation for this is the assumption that a phenomenon is generally experienced in a limited number of different ways [4; 14] and that the different ways of experiencing will be logically related through the phenomenon being experienced [2]. To explain further, individuals are seen to be bearers of different ways of experiencing a phenomenon (i.e., fragments of the phenomenon) that can be drawn together to constitute the phenomenon of interest. The phenomenographer's task is to discern variation in ways of experiencing the phenomenon, across a selected sample group, and to construct categories of description to make visible all of the different ways of experiencing that phenomenon [17].

The data set analysed in this paper using different research perspectives has been taken from a phenomenographic study [12]. As with all research, the aim and context of the original study influenced the selection of phenomenography as the research approach, which, in turn, influenced the study design, methods and outcomes. For this reason, it is important to include a little about the original study. The aim of this study was to identify and describe variation in the ways that a group

of parents viewed and experienced their role in early childhood education and care (ECEC¹). The research site was an integrated ECEC service located in a low socio-economic community. Purposeful sampling was employed to recruit twenty-six parents (mothers and fathers) with recent and varied experience using an ECEC service. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews that were audio-recorded, transcribed in full and verified by participating parents. In this study, the interview transcripts were analysed using Patrick's [19] six steps of analysis, with the added step of a phenomenographic group discussion to explore and refine the emerging categories of description and to explicate the logical relationship between these [4]. Throughout this process, analysis concentrated on identifying what parents conceived their role to be and the combination of features that parents focused on when expressing a particular conception or way of experiencing this role [16].

Phenomenographic analysis

The outcome of the study was the identification of five qualitatively different ways of experiencing the role of parents in ECEC services (see Table 1). As is general practice in phenomenographic research, each category has been assigned a descriptive label and includes a brief statement to highlight similarities and critical differences between the conceptions or ways of experiencing. Each of these conceptions differs in terms of what was focal for parents (i.e. referential aspect or global mean-

ing assigned by parents to the role) and through the structural aspects that framed and delimited this role. (i.e. how parents enacted the role). To illustrate the nature and outcome of phenomenographic research, the table is followed by a summary of Category 1: *Service user conception* and Category 5: *Member of a service community conception*, which represent the least and most complex conceptions expressed by parents participating in the study. When compared, these make visible critical differences in the ways this group of parents experienced their role in ECEC.

- *Category 1: Service user conception.* In Category 1, parents constituted their role as selecting the best service for their child, based on a range of criteria (e.g. word of mouth, visiting the service, parent preferences; cost and availability) and then using that service (referential aspect). The role of parents was defined in quite narrow terms and their focus was confined to their child in the service. This was evidenced in the structural aspects of this conception that included: selecting the best service; taking their child to and from the service; receiving information; and leaving the service if a problem arises. Selecting the service was arguably the most proactive aspect of the role of parents here, whereas other role aspects may be viewed as passive and reactive – receiving rather than providing information, and leaving the service if a problem arises rather than raising any problems with the service provider. Focal in the awareness of these parents was their need to use an ECEC service. Perhaps, not surprisingly, all of the parents interviewed fit within this category – as service users. However, for some, this was the full extent of their experience of this role. Consequently, this is presented as the *base conception* (i.e., the conception from which all other conceptions emerge). This said, the majority of the parents interviewed expressed a broader perspective on the role of parents in ECEC.

- *Category 5: The member of a service community conception.* In Category 5, parents constituted their role as working as a member of the ECEC service community for the benefit of all concerned (referential aspect). This was the most complex conception, and, as such, it incorporated similar role aspects to those identified in the other four categories (e. g., parents selected the best service and used the service, wanted to know what was happening for their child, monitored and supported their ECEC service). However, what makes this conception distinctive is that these parents saw themselves as a member of a service community. Parents expressing this conception talked about working together and the benefits of a sense of community and social connectedness. Parents looked for opportunities to be involved, were proactive in seeking information and sharing their views, and expected to be included in service decision-making, particularly where this was likely to impact on their child and family. This category reflects a shift in emphasis from self (i.e. own child and family) to a wider social context and the shared benefits of parent involve-

Table 1
 Categories of description denoting different ways of experiencing the role of parents in ECEC

No	Category label	What is focal for parents (referential aspect)?
1	The service user conception	The role of parents is seen as selecting and using the best service for their child (illustrated by excerpts from interview with Parent 1)
2	The informed user conception	The role of parents is seen as knowing what's happening for their child in the service
3	The consumer conception	The role of parents is seen as paying for a service, and, thereby, enacting certain consumer rights
4	The partnership conception	The role of parents is seen as supporting the service they have selected for their child and having some say in what happens for their child in the service
5	The member of a service community ECEC	The role of parents is seen as working as a member of the service community for the benefit of all concerned which includes participating in service decision-making (illustrated by excerpts from interview with Parent 2)

¹ In this paper, early childhood education and care (ECEC) is used to refer to formal education and care services prior to school entry (e.g. centre-based long day care, preschool, home-based family day care) and includes outside school hours care services.

ment in ECEC for all concerned – children, families, educators and the broader community.

In the following two sections, the same data set is analysed, firstly through the lens of Conversation analysis [20], and then, through the lens of cultural-historical theory [26; 27; 28].

2. Conversation analysis: zooming in

Conversation analysis (CA) originated through the work of Harvey Sacks [20] and his colleagues Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson [21] in the field of sociology. The intellectual roots of CA include phenomenological sociology [23], ordinary language philosophy [29] and ethnomethodology [8]. Ethnomethodology was particularly influential; Garfinkel argued that sociology must attend to the competent ways people bring about their social worlds and CA provided a means for systematically explicating how this is accomplished through talk in interaction.

CA requires sequential analysis. This involves "proof procedure" [22] whereby a single turn in a sequence is considered to accomplish a social action frequently made relevant by a prior action and, in turn, to provide for some next relevant action. Analysis is of the individual turn, how it responds to a prior turn and how it occasions some next preferred turn (that will display an interpretation of the previous turn). Talk is normative; constructions of turns display orientations to preferred next turns or provide displays that indicate a dispreferred response will follow.

Conversation analysts approach recordings and transcripts in specific ways. Jefferson notation system [3] was developed for the purpose of making features of talk "visible". The system enables transcripts to encode particularities of talk such intonation and silences within and between turns. Transcription of such details are essential for explicating how people accomplish social actions through talk.

Transcription is regarded as part of analysis and requires movement between a recording and the developing transcript. Analysts return to recordings during analysis, unlike in some methodological approaches where analysis is of a transcript once it is developed. Transcripts are cited extensively. Accordingly, the analysis that follows draws on the transcripts, although access to the original recordings would be necessary to develop detailed CA transcripts.

Analysis

The interviewer's initial question (line 1) orients to the role of Parent 1 as a user of services. This causes interactional trouble [20].

- 1 I: Okay, you've used a few services -FDC and OSHC.
- 2 What is your role as a parent using those services?
- 3 P: What do you mean, my role

The parent doesn't provide an answer but seeks clarification through asking a question (2). Conversation

analysts refer to this as the insertion of a question [22] – necessary here for the parent to be able to provide an answer once the meaning of "my role" is sorted.

The interviewer responds to the question as a problem of not understanding the reference to "role" so provides an alternative question ("Well, what do you do?"). She specifies selection of services as something the parent did, thus provides a concrete example and requests that the parent talk about that.

- 4 I: Well, what do you do? You've selected these
- 5 services. Can you start by talking to me about
- 6 that?
- 7 P: Yeah, I'm just trying to remember how I actually
- 8 got on to FDC in the first place. Someone did
- 9 mention it to me. Anyhow. It was like that, and I
- 10 always had a bit of a thing with child care
- 11 centres. I'm not real keen on them. So, it just
- 12 seemed a better alternative at the time, and
- 13 it seems to have worked out.

A request makes agreement relevant as a preferred response. The parent provides this ("yeah") and then takes an extended turn to describe how a particular service was initially selected. He glosses over unremembered details while confirming that someone told him about it. The parent adds additional information that was part of the consideration -a personal issue with child care centres. Again, "bit of a thing" (10) glosses the problem and avoids providing details other than not being "keen on them" (11). So talk introduces a personal consideration as to why family day care was a better alternative. The use of "just" downplays the selection process and then two assessments are provided; one made in the past ("a better alternative at the time") and the second in hindsight (13).

The interviewer accepts the parent's account formulating it as making a choice "in terms of that" (14–15) with "that" indexing the parent's issue. She then shifts her talk to the related topic of "ongoing role" (15). This displays her understanding that what "role" means has been clarified through discussion of the service selection and she can pursue further talk about the parent's role.

- 14 I: So you selected FDC and made a choice in terms of
- 15 that. Do you have an ongoing role?
- 16 P: Um. Oh, not really. I just pick him up and drop
- 17 him off and say how are you going to whoever it
- 18 is and that's probably really the end of it.

The question about ongoing role makes a yes/no response relevant. The parent shows his hearing that agreement is the preferred response. Rather than providing that, the response "not really" is preceded by "um" and "oh" (16) – harbingers of a dispreferred response since they delay the final provision of his answer and the words "not really" mitigate a 'bald-faced' negative response ("no"). The description that follows provides a matter-of-fact account – picking up, dropping off and polite greetings. The final comment again

delays that this is "the end of it" by prefacing it with "probably really".

The researcher's next question (19) topicalizes what happens during the day. Thus it raises something not considered in the parent's response. It's a direct question requiring a yes/no answer. The response "oh yeah" (21) indicates a realization, and acceptance, that the interviewer is suggesting that what happens during the day is of relevance.

19 I: Do you want to know anything about what happens during the day?

21 P: Oh, yeah. Well, if something happens, the lady who runs it down there would tell me anyway. So, if I don't hear anything, I assume everything is okay.

26 I: Can I ask you why not? (*Discussing why parent does not complete service surveys*)

27 P Like I said, I'm looking after my little space and unless there's a great problem with that
29 I do not see need to do anything about it.

The substance of the parent's response places the responsibility for what happens in the day onto a staff member who "runs it" and implies his own right to assume that everything is okay unless he is told otherwise. In this way, the parent makes clear that the handing over of his child passes responsibility to staff. Therefore, the parent's talk indicates what happens in the day is an aspect of the ongoing role of providers of the service rather than of his ongoing role as user of that service.

Overall, the sometimes matter-of-fact responses of Parent 1 can be understood in relation to the interactional accomplishment of the interview itself. The parent is "heard" to engage with the interviewer's questioning about role, not understood initially, and to resist attempts to cast "role" as encompassing what happens during the day. In this sense, the parent answers the initial question (1) over a number of turns and presents his use of the service as involving a clear delineation between his role and that of staff.

In the second interview, the interviewer indicates "selecting the service" as the topic and probes for information with a "how" question (1-2). The answer describes what Parent 2 thought the selected service would provide (4-6).

1 I: Let's start with selecting the service. How did you go about that?

3 P: ... And, so, I chose one that I thought would provide the best care, like the best experiences for him, and he's in the optimal learning experience...Yeah. Like mostly, wherever I've gone, it seems I become good friends. Like I get to know them (staff) really well, and sit down and talk to them.

Expressions provide assessment of services sought although gloss what makes for the "best experiences" or

"optimal learning experiences". The parent projects herself as a good parent who knows and wants what is best for her child and a parent who goes out of her way to get to know staff.

The interviewer shifts the talk to another aspect of service use — being able to have a say about its operation. Her yes/no interrogative results in a confirmation.

10 I: In the services that you've used, have you ever had opportunity to have a say on how the service operated.

13 P: Yes.

14 I: Can you tell me about some of those opportunities?

15 P: When they were going to introduce the um, put the video cameras in, and getting parent's point of view.

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20 They sent you out a survey sheet.

21 But, it actually did not give you any opportunity to say whether you did or did not want it in the centre.

22 We approached all the staff and let them know.

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24 And then we had a meeting...

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26 And then they had a meeting and put that to the people who owned the centre.

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33 ...And I've also attended, they used to have parent nights and also like, P&C meeting type things, and I've also gone to those. But hardly any parents ever turn up.

The interviewer requests specific information and Parent 2 provides this with a detailed description of the installation of video cameras (omitted here for brevity's sake) and then reference to parent nights. In describing her attendance she produces a comparison with other parents categorising herself with the minority who turn up.

The interviewer asks for further information about the meetings — the part of the parent's talk that was less detailed- and the parent elaborates on her own qualities as a parent and user of services. Central to the interview is talk by Parent 2 that produces her as a particular kind of parent.

37 I: Why did you go to those meetings?

38 P: Because I like to know what's happening, and I like to be involved. Because, I think if you're involved, you have some sort of say in how your kids...what's happening to them. And, if there are problems with your kid, then, I don't know. They're more likely to treat your children differently if you're involved, than a parent that never comes along, and I don't know,
46 just drops her kid off and picks them up.

- ::
49 I believe that public schools can be just as good as private schools.
50 It's the amount of interaction that parents have with those schools.
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52 I think a really good P&C makes a really good school
53 because it involves all the parents and
54 it provides a sense of community for people.
55 And I think that community then helps kids
56 I: How?
57 P: Like back in the olden days, like you had your extended family.
58 But a lot of people don't have extended family these days.
59 They have to rely on next-door neighbours or friends they've met to provide that...
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60: And kids grow up with the sense of belonging.
62 I: And you think that parents can provide that by working with schools?
63: P: That's right. Because it shows to the kids that their parents are interested in school and
64: interested in what they're doing
::
72 Summing up... Like I said, I am a parent
73 and I am trying to watch out for my kids.
74 So I want to be able to shape their world

The parent not only describes her own qualities — likes being informed and being involved — she explains their importance by linking being involved to having "some sort of say". She poses the scenario of how staff will react to problems and, although twice claiming not to know, she asserts that staff treat children differently if "you're involved" (44). She then provides a description of another kind of parent — who doesn't come along, drops her "kid" off and picks them up (45-46). This description, and use of comparison, implies that it is of a parent who is not involved. Her description of being involved takes account of how that involvement is interpreted by the staff. Thus, she invokes perceptions of parents by staff as directly impacting on the provision of care, and constructs herself as a particular kind of parent.

3. Cultural-historical theory: Zooming out

In the following section the data sets have been analysed using a cultural-historical methodology as suggested by Hedegaard and Fler [10]. This methodology has its origins with Vygotsky [26; 27; 28], and Leontiev [13]. Theoretical concepts developed within a cultural-historical framework are not pure abstractions. They are analytical lenses utilised as tools which allow reconstruction of the process of cultural development in its dynamic and complex form within socio-cultural contexts. Through utilising Cultural-historical analytical lenses we are provided with opportunities to analyse the data collected from a developmental perspective and have selected the concept of the "social situation of

development" (SSD) [28, p. 198] as the most appropriate analytical tool for the data provided.

The SSD is not a concrete empirical situation in which the child exists and acts; the content of this theoretical concept is much more complex and related to development.

- It is a unique relation between the child and their social reality. This means that different children in the same social situation have different social situations of development dependent upon the social interactions that the child is involved with.

- It represents the initial moment of all dynamic changes that occur in the child's development. This means that the child's individual developmental trajectory depends on social contexts that the child actively participates in and interacts with.

- It determines wholly and completely the forms and the path along which the child will acquire ever newer personal characteristics, drawing them from the social, the path along which the social becomes the individual. This means that the social situation is the source of individual development as a dialectical process of interrelations of the social and the individual.

The task here is not to provide a complete analysis using a cultural-historical theoretical lens; an example is provided to showcase how only one theoretical concept (SSD) is potentially used as an analytical tool to support better understanding of the positions of these two parents as portrayed in the data provided. This presents a zooming out from the analysis and allows an opening of new layers and dimensions of data. In this particular case the concept of SSD potentially allows viewing of the child's perspective followed by the socio-cultural, socio-economic and political contexts where the position of parents exist and finally the dialectics of change in the social role and the position of the parents.

Cultural-historical analysis

Hedegaard and Fler [10] propose three levels of analysis. The initial analysis is termed common sense interpretation, based on the researcher's understanding of the interactions in the specific activity settings. The second level of analysis is situated practice where "dominating motives, patterns of interaction, and problems can be explicated" [10, p. 58]. The final level is the thematic analysis, which includes the theoretical analysis and presupposes special analytical tools. In relation to the data presented, the most appropriate tool for this analysis is the concept of the SSD.

Thematic analysis

According to Hedegaard and Fler [10] the child's perspective is set in the social situation which includes the setting of the ECEC service, the demands from the educator and the intention of the child focusing on motives, realised through conflicts. Therefore, as an ana-

lytical tool, educators, parents and the child's data come together to present the child's perspective. The data provides some indication of the parent's perspective, which potentially supports our understanding of the significant differences between two SSD. As the SSD is a relation of the child and social reality, this provides the possibility to infer the type of social situation the child lives in. Parent 1 does not show an interest in the child's life at the ECEC service ("pick him up and drop him off"); the child's voice is not heard ("So, if I don't hear anything, I assume everything is okay"); the parent is not interested in completing a service survey ("I don't see the need to do anything about it"). So, the data provides some evidence of a particular type of SSD for the child of Parent 1. In contrast, Parent 2's interview provides some evidence different type of social situation. This parent is actively involved in activities in the ECEC service ("if you're involved, you have some sort of say in how your kids...what's happening to them") and the parent believes it is beneficial to the child ("They're more likely to treat your children differently"). So, the SSD of Parent 2's child is different; what is potentially beneficial for the child is taken into account ("I want to be able to shape their world").

Second, the concept of SSD allows the possibility to consider the socio-cultural, socio-economic and political contexts. Analysing the data from this perspective, it becomes clear that the position of the parent depends on the context of their individual social situation, values, beliefs and previous experiences. While there is not enough data reflecting Parent 1's social context, it can be inferred that this parent has difficulties in identifying his role as a parent using the service ("What do you mean, my role?"). The child's everyday life in the ECEC service is not his area of interest ("I'm looking after my little space"). Cooperation and consistent relations with the service and educators is not the main interest ("I'm not real keen on them"). Parent 1's vocabulary consists of 'I' and reference to himself; it is inferred that this parent is basing his choice of service on what suits him, with little mention of the child.

With Parent 2, the data provides some indication of a different context defining the role of the parent. Parent 2 takes responsibility for the child's learning and development in selecting the ECEC service ("one that I thought would provide the best care, ... the optimal learning experience"). Long-term relations with the educators are an important component of the SSD of the child ("I get to know them (staff) really well, and sit down and talk to them"). It is inferred that this may be the result of a wider context of beliefs and responsibilities of parenthood ("Because it shows the kids that their parents are interested in school and interested in what they're doing"). The importance and value of belonging to the community as a component of the cultural and social context is clearly indicated ("It involves all the parents and it provides a sense of community for people... community then helps kids"). The data provides an indication of a strong family context that informs the position of Parent 2 ("...like you had your extended fam-

ily... [today] they have to rely on next-door neighbours or friends ... And kids grow up with the sense of belonging"). And finally, the data shows some indication of the socio-economic context and beliefs of Parent 2 ("I believe that public schools can be just as good as private schools. It's the amount of interaction that parents have with those schools").

The parent's position as a component of the SSD is not stable, it has a history; it changes over time depending on the changing context of the situation. The data does not provide any individual/family histories of Parent 1 and 2; however, there are some pieces, which indicate the dynamics of the relationships between these parents and their ECEC services. Thus, Parent 1 describes briefly ("I always had a bit of a thing with child care centres"). On the other hand, Parent 2's interview reflects some history of the relationship ("We approached all the staff and let them know. ...And then we had a meeting... they had a meeting and put that to the people who owned the centre"). Parent 2's vocabulary included the use of a "sense of community", "the child's sense of belonging", "extended family", "next-door neighbours" which represents the collective "we" instead of individual "I". Participant 2 values parental participation suggesting it will help the children to feel the importance of attending school and respect it more allowing the shaping of the child's world.

Findings and Discussion: Lenses Phenomenography lens

Applying a phenomographic lens to the data illuminated five qualitatively different ways of experiencing the role of parents in ECEC that are logically, and in this case, hierarchically related. The categories of description make visible all of the ways of experiencing the role of parents in ECEC amongst this group of parents and similarities and critical differences between different ways of experiencing this role. Critical differences were related to:

- whether parents perceived an ongoing role;
- the motivation for parent participation (i.e. individualistic or collective benefits);
- the nature of the role of parents (i.e. passive, reactive, proactive);
- perceptions of personal responsibility and the responsibilities of others;
- perceptions of what constitutes parent participation.

In phenomenography, the focus is on collective experience and the sum of the parts is seen to provide deeper insight into the whole phenomenon of interest. In terms of practical application, the discernment of variation and critical differences between ways of experiencing the same thing offers a foundation for learning [17]. In this instance, this could be supporting parents to learn more about the different roles they can play in their child's ECEC service. In addition, teacher reflection on the different ways of experiencing this role may

provide the basis for diverse strategies to optimise parental participation while respecting variation in needs and expectations.

Conversation analysis lens

The CA perspective highlights the ways that views provided by research participants cannot be separated from the interactional accomplishment of the research interview itself. That is, aspects of the interview oriented to by interviewer and research participant are integrally related to the topic under discussion. In this case, how parents talked with the interviewer about their role as users of early childhood services produced differing accounts of what counts as achieving quality child care services. For one parent it was being able to take-for-granted that suitable care was being provided and for the other it was interacting purposefully to bring about appropriate and differentiated care for her child.

Although an analysis has been provided from the CA perspective, to bring CA to bear more fully on data requires closer attention to the original recordings. This highlights then that within qualitative research, researchers have very different ways of "working with" recorded data to develop transcripts, and hold differing perspectives on what are data and how to approach their analysis [7].

Cultural-historical lens

The first finding from the data sets shows that there are two different parental perspectives, which provide varied social situations for the children. Parent 1 uses the term "I" consistently and analysis supports Irvine's [12] finding that he is an individual consumer. Parent 2 consistently uses the term "we" and "community" and analysis suggests she is a social activist. These different parental perspectives afford different paths of development for each child. According to Vygotsky [26], these two situations provide different developmental trajectories where development is a dialectical process, as the social becomes the individual. However, it is not possible to provide a conclusion concerning all of the dynamic changes that occur in the child's development, as the data set is limited.

The second finding provides information regarding different parental perspectives and their personal understanding of roles in relation to using ECEC services. Drawing on the concept of the SSD allows consideration of the context of the parent's role and their position within socio-cultural, socio-economic and political contexts. Although the data does not provide a history of the changing positions for each parent, taking a cultural historical lens, it can be seen that the parent's position as a component of the SSD changes over time depending on the changing context. A cultural-historical theoretical framework allows the researcher to look at the data as dynamic in order to identify the changes, turn-

ing points and dramatic collisions in social relations and between social relations [25]. Instead of the classical "objects under study", cultural-historical theory provides the system of analytical tools as "processes under study" [27, p. 43]. Every social position has a history of its becoming, the dialectics of present, past and the future.

Overall the SSD is an important concept in cultural-historical theory to analyse data in different socio-cultural, socio-economic contexts. The concept analysed two parents' different social positions in order to show their role and perspective in the same social context.

Conclusion: Lessons

The primary purpose of our research collaboration was to learn more about each other's preferred research perspective, while considering the benefits and challenges of working with multiple research perspectives on any given research project. So, what have we learned? Reflective of the findings of others [11; 24], our work together emphasises the idiosyncratic nature of the selected research perspectives, and how each perspective shapes and influences the research process and outcomes. The original application of a phenomenographic perspective naturally influenced the questions asked, the nature of the data collected and the analyses produced. The challenge and limitations of 'retro-fitting' different research perspectives to an existing data set became clear early in the collaboration and highlighted the need for collaborative researchers to have a general appreciation of each other's approach. For example, while all of the research perspectives can work with interview data, the lack of access to the original audio-recorded interviews and absence of more contextual information impeded the application of Conversation analysis and Cultural historical analysis.

As suggested by Abes [1], our collaboration has also enhanced our understanding of own research perspectives, including strengths, limitations and opportunities to improve our research. As Slaughter et al., [24] contend, collaborations such as this provide opportunity to build researcher capacity, that is, not to become instant experts in each other's approaches but to gain new insights into our own. For example, the Conversation analysis provided a fine-grained analysis of the interview talk in interaction, emphasising the dialectic relationship between the researcher and participant, interview questions and responses. Such analysis highlights the way that views provided in any research interview are influenced by the way questions are asked and answers received – verbally and non-verbally – and identifies opportunities for improved interview techniques. In addition, working with data where we were not involved in conception of the research project and collection of data means we do not obtain the full nuance of what and how conversations are manifested purely from the written form and therefore different interpretations occur.

Finally, while the focus of this investigation has been the research process rather than the research topic, findings here demonstrate how different research perspectives can work together to strengthen research and to enhance understanding of a phenomenon of interest, such as the role of parents in ECEC. While applying different 'width' lenses, and looking into the data in search of different things, our shared findings make visible two different parental perspectives and provide insight into how these parents understand their roles, responsibilities and relationship with their ECEC service. At the same time, different perspectives

raised new questions, for example, the influence of the broader socio-cultural context of these families on children's learning and parent participation within the ECEC service. To realise these benefits, our experience points to the critical need for advance planning, careful attention to the selection of the different research perspectives and collection of shared data that fulfils the distinct requirements of each approach. A critical success factor here is that all researchers commence with a general appreciation of each research perspective, and agree to respect and preserve the distinctive aims and features of each perspective.

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Призмы концепций: опыт анализа исследования в области дошкольного образования с точки зрения трех различных подходов

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В современных западных исследованиях сотрудничество между учеными ценится очень высоко, однако для ученых, придерживающихся различных теоретических подходов, использовать эту активно развивающуюся в последнее время практику бывает затруднительно. Тем не менее, несмотря на все сложности, попытка проанализировать данные одного и того же исследования сквозь призму нескольких концепций может оказаться весьма полезным опытом. Авторы настоящей статьи, работающие в рамках разных подходов, предприняли подобную попытку с тем, чтобы узнать чуть больше о научном мировоззрении и интерпретациях друг друга, нежели для того, чтобы вмиг стать экспертами по другим подходам. Анализируемые данные представляют собой несколько интервью с родителями дошкольников, проведенных в рамках более крупного исследования, посвященного дошкольному образованию в Австралии. В статье приводится анализ фрагментов двух интервью с точки зрения трех различных подходов: феноменологии, конверсионного анализа и культурно-исторической теории. Результаты настоящей работы показывают, что использование сразу нескольких концептуальных «линз» для анализа данных позволяет не только по-разному их проинтерпретировать, но и увидеть сильные и слабые стороны этих интерпретаций, а также открывающиеся возможности. В статье утверждается, что практика сотрудничества между учеными, придерживающимися разных научных взглядов, обогащает их представления о разнообразных принципах и методах работы, расширяя возможности и повышая уровень и качество исследования.

Ключевые слова: дошкольный возраст, исследовательские позиции, феноменология, конверсионный анализ, культурно-историческая теория.

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