Quantifying the Relationship between Parental Involvement and English Language Proficiency among EFL Learners

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Abstract—This study investigates the correlation between parental involvement and English language proficiency among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in non-English speaking contexts. Despite the established significance of parental involvement in general academic success, its specific impact on EFL learning remains under-researched. Building on previous studies and theories, this research aims to fill this gap by quantifying the relationship between these two variables in a non-English speaking environment. Guided by the primary research question "Is there a significant correlation between the level of parental involvement and English language proficiency among EFL learners?" the study hypothesizes that higher levels of parental involvement will be associated with greater English language proficiency. By exploring this potential relationship, the study hopes to provide insights beneficial for educators, policymakers, and parents in supporting EFL learners more effectively. The outcomes of this research will contribute to the literature on second language acquisition and parental involvement, broadening our understanding of the dynamics involved in EFL learning.

Keywords—English as a Foreign Language (EFL), parental involvement, academic success, non-English speaking contexts, English language proficiency.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become increasingly important in non-English speaking countries due to the global significance of English (Crystal, 2003). Proficiency in English can offer significant opportunities for personal, educational, and professional development (Graddol, 2006). A variety of factors can influence the learning process, one of which is parental involvement. Parental involvement in a child's education is widely recognized as a key factor in academic success (Jeynes, 2007). Parents' active engagement in their children's schooling can create a positive and supportive learning environment that fosters academic achievement. However, the role of parental involvement in EFL learning specifically remains under-researched, particularly in non-English speaking contexts (Khan, 2019). The purpose of this study is to quantify the correlation between parental involvement and English language proficiency among EFL learners. This research aims to fill the gap in the existing literature by investigating whether a significant relationship exists between these two variables in a specific non-English speaking context. By doing so, it will provide insights that could help educators, policymakers, and parents to more effectively support EFL learners. The primary research question guiding this study is: "Is there a significant correlation between the level of parental involvement and English language proficiency among EFL learners?" In accordance with previous studies highlighting the positive effects of parental involvement on students' academic outcomes (Fan & Chen, 2001), it is hypothesized that higher levels of parental involvement will be associated with greater English language proficiency among EFL learners.

In an era of globalization, proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become a significant skill that promotes competitiveness in the academic, social, and professional realms (Graddol, 2006). The global significance of English in the contemporary world has led to its widespread adoption as the primary foreign language taught in many non-English speaking countries (Crystal, 2003). This situation necessitates an examination of the various factors that influence EFL acquisition, including the role of parental involvement. Parental involvement in a child's
education has been empirically recognized as a critical factor in academic success across diverse contexts (Jeynes, 2007). Epstein (2001) argues that parental involvement encompasses a wide range of behaviors including helping with homework, discussing school activities, and participation in school functions. A myriad of studies have established that such engagement positively impacts students' academic performance (Fan & Chen, 2001), self-esteem (Usher & Kober, 2012), and reduces dropout rates (Rumberger, 2004). Despite its significance, the role of parental involvement in EFL learning specifically has received limited attention in the research literature, particularly in non-English speaking contexts (Khan, 2019). Researchers like Guo (2016) have made initial strides by confirming the positive effects of parental involvement on children’s English language learning in the Chinese context. However, these studies are few and far between, leaving a considerable gap in our understanding. Given this context, the purpose of this study is to quantify the correlation between parental involvement and English language proficiency among EFL learners. This research seeks to enrich the current literature by exploring whether a significant relationship exists between these two variables in a specific non-English speaking context. The insights derived could have profound implications for educators, policymakers, and parents aiming to provide more effective support for EFL learners. The primary research question guiding this study is: "Is there a significant correlation between the level of parental involvement and English language proficiency among EFL learners?" Based on prior studies illustrating the positive effects of parental involvement on students' academic outcomes (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Wilder, 2014), it is hypothesized that higher levels of parental involvement will correlate with greater English language proficiency among EFL learners.

**Research questions**

Q1: Is there a statistically significant correlation between parental involvement and English language proficiency among EFL learners?

Q2: What aspects of parental involvement (e.g., helping with homework, discussing school activities, participation in school events) have the most significant relationship with EFL learners' English language proficiency?

2. **Literature Review**

1.2. Parental Involvement in Education

The role of parents in their children's education has emerged as a key focus for scholars, education professionals, and policy developers, given its paramount importance in driving children's educational achievements (Jeynes, 2007; Epstein, 2001). Numerous investigations have shed light on the diverse facets of parental engagement and their extensive influence on academic performance. Jeynes (2007), in his wide-ranging meta-analysis, interpreted parental engagement in an extensive sense, incorporating a spectrum of parental attitudes and actions in the setting of their children's education. These encompass active parental participation in activities related to the school, efficient dialogue with children about educational matters, and the aspirations and hopes parents hold for their children's scholastic achievements. Jeynes (2007) noted a meaningful positive correlation between these facets of parental engagement and pupils' scholastic outcomes, underlining the essential role of parents' active engagement in fostering academic accomplishment. Adding to this understanding, Epstein (2001) provided a more intricate and holistic structure of parental engagement. This model, comprised of six involvement types – parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community – offers a nuanced perspective on the manifold ways parents can participate in their children's education. Each involvement type assumes a unique role in fostering children's academic achievements and wellbeing. The 'parenting' type underscores the establishment of a supportive and growth-oriented home setting that facilitates children's learning and growth. 'Communicating' is characterized by efficient bilateral communications between parents and schools concerning school curricula and children's progress. 'Volunteering' involves parents' proactive involvement in school events and programs. The 'learning at home' facet pertains to the assistance parents offer their children with homework and other activities linked to the curriculum. 'Decision making' integrates parents into school decision processes through active participation in parent-teacher organizations or school boards. Lastly, 'collaborating with
the community' concerns the linkages parents establish with community resources to augment school programs and student learning (Epstein, 2001).

Epstein's (2001) model elucidates the complexity of parental participation in education, emphasizing that each facet of involvement works collectively towards improving children's scholastic outcomes. This model provides a theoretical baseline for comprehending the variety of methods parents can utilize to engage in their children's educational journey, underscoring the pivotal role of each form of involvement in enhancing student achievement. The concept of parental involvement, as detailed by Jeynes (2007) and Epstein (2001), is a sophisticated construct, incorporating a range of parental attitudes and actions. The significant contributions of these researchers have enhanced our comprehension of the varied strategies parents can employ to engage in their children's education, stressing the importance of such involvement in fostering student achievement. Nevertheless, despite these enlightening insights, there's a demand for further research to delve into the subtleties of parental involvement across varied educational settings, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language instruction.

2.2. Impact of Parental Involvement on Students' Academic Performance

The influence of parental involvement on students' academic performance has been a significant focus of many research studies. In their meta-analysis, Fan & Chen (2001) identified a strong correlation between parental involvement and students' academic success. Their research specifically highlighted that parents' aspirations and expectations for their children's academic achievement were most strongly linked to improved academic performance.

These findings align with the wider literature suggesting that parental involvement, in various forms, has a measurable impact on students' academic achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). For instance, a meta-analysis by Hill & Tyson (2009) focusing on middle school students indicated that parental involvement at home, particularly activities that support the learning process, such as helping with homework or engaging in academic discussions, had a more significant effect on academic achievement than other forms of involvement. Hill & Tyson's (2009) study underlines the importance of not just the presence of parental involvement but also the nature of the involvement. Parental involvement is not a monolithic concept but a multifaceted one that can take on numerous forms and manifestations, each with varying effects on a child's educational outcomes.

2.3. Parental Involvement in EFL Learning

Despite the demonstrated importance of parental involvement in education, its role in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning remains somewhat under-researched. There are, however, some noteworthy exceptions. For instance, Guo (2016) conducted a study that explored the impact of parental involvement on young children's EFL learning in a Chinese context. Guo's (2016) findings suggest a positive correlation between parental involvement and children's EFL achievement, particularly when parents used English for communication at home. This finding suggests that parental involvement may play a unique role in EFL learning, which is distinct from its role in other areas of education.

2.4. The Gap in the Literature

While the aforementioned studies present crucial knowledge, they also highlight existing gaps in the current research landscape. The bulk of research concerning parental involvement has primarily centered around general academic accomplishment (Jeynes, 2007; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009), with comparatively less emphasis placed on its effect on EFL learning (Guo, 2016). Additionally, a considerable portion of these investigations have been carried out within Western or Chinese contexts, leaving a scarcity of studies conducted in other non-English speaking environments. This literature review emphasizes the requirement for further research into the role parental involvement plays in EFL learning, particularly in various non-English speaking settings. By examining the connection between parental involvement and the proficiency of EFL learners in English language acquisition, this study aims to enrich the prevailing body of understanding in this field.

3. Methodology

This research study adopts a quantitative approach to understand the correlation between parental involvement and English language acquisition among EFL learners. The target population for this study consists of EFL learners and their parents in a non-English speaking context.
1.3. Sampling

A stratified random sampling method will be utilized to select participants for this study. We aim to recruit a diverse group of students from various age groups, learning stages, and socio-economic backgrounds, along with their parents. The total sample size is anticipated to be around 500 pairs of students and parents.

2.3. Data Collection

Data will be collected through two main instruments: a parental involvement survey and an English language proficiency test. Parental Involvement Survey: Parents will be asked to complete a survey measuring their level of involvement in their children's EFL learning. This survey will be adapted from Epstein's (2001) framework of parental involvement and will include questions about parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. English Language Proficiency Test: EFL learners will be asked to take a standardized English language proficiency test to measure their English language skills. The test will assess the four key skills of English language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data collected from the parental involvement survey and English language proficiency test will be analysed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the characteristics of the study population and the overall patterns of parental involvement and EFL learning. Inferential statistics, specifically regression analysis, will be used to test the research hypotheses and determine if there's a significant correlation between parental involvement and students' English language acquisition.

This study adheres to ethical standards for research involving human subjects, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' rights and welfare. All participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the data collection process, and their rights as participants before they give their consent to participate in the study. This research design allows for a systematic investigation into the influence of parental involvement on EFL learners' English language proficiency. By applying rigorous quantitative methods, the study aims to provide robust empirical evidence to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this area.

4. RESULTS

The results of the Parental Involvement Survey and the English language proficiency test were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the study population, revealing a diverse range of ages, learning stages, and socio-economic backgrounds among the EFL learners and their parents. The average parental involvement score from the survey was X, suggesting a moderate level of parental involvement in the EFL learners' English language learning. The average English language proficiency score was Y, indicating a moderate level of English language proficiency among the EFL learners. A regression analysis was conducted to test the research hypotheses and determine the correlation between parental involvement and students' English language acquisition. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between parental involvement and English language proficiency among the EFL learners ($r = Z$, $p < .05$).

Upon further analysis of the sub-components of parental involvement, it was found that the 'learning at home' and 'communication' dimensions had the strongest correlations with students' English language proficiency. These results suggest that higher levels of parental involvement, particularly in terms of supporting learning at home and communicating about school-related matters, are associated with higher levels of English language proficiency among EFL learners. Please note that the values X, Y, and Z, and the details of the findings, are hypothetical and intended to illustrate how the results might be presented. The actual results would depend on the data collected in the study.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

This table would show the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for both parental involvement and English language proficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD1</td>
<td>Min1</td>
<td>Max1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>SD2</td>
<td>Min2</td>
<td>Max2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion

This section discusses the main findings of the research study, relating them back to the research question and the existing literature. In our hypothetical study, we found a significant positive correlation between parental involvement and EFL learners' English language proficiency. These results align with previous studies that have demonstrated a positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement in general (Jeynes, 2007; Fan & Chen, 2001). Furthermore, our study revealed that the 'learning at home' and 'communication' dimensions of parental involvement, as defined by Epstein (2001), had the strongest correlations with English language proficiency. This suggests that parents' efforts to support their children's learning at home, as well as effective communication about school-related matters, may be particularly influential in promoting English language acquisition among EFL learners. Furthermore, the 'learning at home' and 'communication' dimensions of parental involvement, particularly align with Epstein's (2001) framework, suggesting these forms of involvement as potentially more influential in promoting English language acquisition among EFL learners. In the context of EFL learning, this study has important implications. Firstly, it supports the limited but growing body of research on parental involvement in EFL learning. Secondly, it emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in promoting English language acquisition. However, more research is needed to further explore and understand this complex relationship in diverse educational and cultural contexts.
context. This recognition might prompt educators and policy-makers to consider more seriously the role of parents in strategies designed to improve EFL teaching and learning.

Despite the significant insights gained from the study, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The self-reported nature of the Parental Involvement Survey used might have led to potential biases, as parents could over- or underestimate their involvement level. Future research might utilize more objective measures, or triangulate data from multiple sources, such as teachers' perceptions or observational data, to gain a more comprehensive view of parental involvement (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). Moreover, this research provides correlational findings, hence causation cannot be inferred. Future studies should consider using longitudinal or experimental designs to determine whether increased parental involvement would cause an improvement in students' English language proficiency (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Furthermore, this study did not deeply explore the diverse cultural, socioeconomic, or personal factors that may influence the nature and extent of parental involvement and its impact on EFL learning (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Future research could employ a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data, to delve deeper into these contextual factors. The findings of this study reiterate the significant role of parental involvement in EFL learning and emphasize the need for strategies that effectively engage parents in their children's English language learning journey. Furthermore, the study underscores the necessity of continued research in this area, to further uncover and understand the complex dynamics of parental involvement in diverse educational and cultural contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

This research study significantly underscores the impact of parental involvement on the English language proficiency of EFL learners, reinforcing the importance of parental engagement as highlighted in prior studies (Jeynes, 2007; Fan & Chen, 2001; Epstein, 2001). It contributes to the growing body of research on parental involvement in EFL learning, with particular focus on the roles of 'learning at home' and 'communication' dimensions of parental involvement in language acquisition. This study also adds a new layer to existing literature by examining different non-English speaking contexts and focusing specifically on English language proficiency, providing novel insights that could inform educational practices and policy formulation in the EFL context. However, the study acknowledges inherent limitations due to the use of self-reported measures for parental involvement and the potential for bias. Future research could further enrich these findings by employing more objective measures or using data from multiple sources, such as teacher reports or observational studies. While the study provides important correlational insights, causality cannot be inferred. Longitudinal or experimental designs in future research could help establish the causal impact of parental involvement on students' English language proficiency. The need for further research into contextual factors that may influence parental involvement and its effects on EFL learning has also been highlighted, suggesting the use of a mixed-methods design for a more comprehensive understanding. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the crucial role of parental involvement in EFL learning and the importance of effective engagement strategies, pointing towards the need for continued exploration in diverse cultural and educational contexts.

Reference

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