The Role of Parental Involvement on Students' Readiness in Early Bilingual Education: A Qualitative Exploration

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Abstract

As more parents and educators see the value in raising bilingual children, bilingual schools are growing in popularity, offering dual-language instruction from an early age. In this situation children need a student readiness when they are mentally, physically and emotionally ready to learn. Therefore, student readiness is crucial. This study examines the role of parental involvement in the readiness of early bilingual students. Conducted in Doremi preschool Denpasar, Bali, the study used a qualitative method involving interviews and observations. This research involving six parents and their kindergarten children. The interviews were conducted based on six critical aspects outlined in Epstein's parental involvement framework. Additionally, classroom behavior observations were made to evaluate the students from these representative parents. The findings reveal that parental involvement plays a significant role in early bilingual students' readiness. High levels of parental involvement are associated with improved language acquisition, greater academic engagement, and smoother adaptation to the bilingual environment. Conversely, low levels of involvement often result in academic struggles and difficulties with language acquisition. To promote parental involvement, the study suggests strategies such as regular parent-teacher meetings and fostering a supportive home learning environment. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the impact of parental involvement in bilingual education and offer practical recommendations for schools and educators seeking to support early bilingual students more effectively.

Keywords: *bilingual education, epstein's framework, parental involvement, students' readiness*

Introduction

In this era, every individual is expected to be able to speak more than one language, especially English. According to Effendi et al. (2022), in this era of globalization, foreign languages, especially English, play an essential role in world communication in the fields of technology, economic systems and education. Therefore, the importance of mastering English language is increasing. Many parents expect their children to be able to speak English from an early age as English provides a great opportunity for their children to get a lot of information from abroad (Effendi et al., 2022). In addition, teaching English to children from an early age is very effective because in the early age the increase in children's intelligence is very significant. English language learning is needed from elementary school to high school so that students have a good level of understanding of English (Hendrawan et al., 2021). Therefore, there are many schools offer bilingual education to educate individuals who speak more than two languages.

In recent years, an increasing number of schools have implemented bilingual education programs. Bilingual education means that students are not only taught about the target language but also taught learning materials using two languages (Pratama, 2017). Bilingual education is available from kindergarten to high school. The number of schools that offer bilingual education shows that there is a lot of enthusiasm for bilingual education. According to Sirait et al. (2022), the development of bilingual education in Indonesia is not a negative thing but it is a positive thing because it shows that education in Indonesia is developed. The number of schools in Indonesia that use bilingual programs is one example of improving the standard of education in Indonesia. This is because English is an international language that is better learnt as early as possible to build a habit for the students. Salkind (2008) as cited in Sirait et al. (2022) mentioned that bilingual education is a program that uses two languages as its main medium of instruction in the learning process. In Bali, there are many schools that offer bilingual education (Pratama, 2017). It is because Bali is a tourism area and many parents send their children to bilingual schools. To fulfil the parents' expectations to raise bilingual children, it is important that parents are also involved in accompanying their children on their learning journey.

Parental involvement is an active activity or participation that is done by parents to support their children's education (Melanium et al., 2023). Parental involvement in children's education includes monitoring the progress, communicating with teachers and school staff and creating a supportive learning environment for the children (Melanium et al., 2023). According to Sari & Seli (2014), parental involvement is an activity when the parents communicate with

academic institutions to achieve their children's academic success. It means the role of parents when they are supporting and working with the school staff. In general, parental involvement is active participation of both father and mother in supporting their children's education journey (Avvisati et al., 2010). According to Epstein (1995), there are six types of parental involvement, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, making decisions, collaborating with the community. First, parenting means that the parents get the guidance from the school to create a supportive learning environment at home. Second, communicating means that parents have effective communication with the teachers and school staff to know their children's progress. Third, volunteering means that parents support the school's goals and program. Fourth, learning at home means that parents can help children in doing their homework. Fifth, making decisions means that school invites parents to be involved in school decisions. Last, collaborating with the community means that parents collaborate with school to improve their children's learning. Therefore, parental involvement in children's education has a vital role in the success of students' learning and students' readiness.

Students' learning readiness is the level of concentration in learning. Unesco (2007) as cited in Dangol & Shrestha (2019) mentioned that students' readiness is the level of individual students when she or he is ready to learn mentally, physically and emotionally. Students' readiness can be seen by checking three factors, namely emotive-attitudinal readiness, cognitive readiness and behavioral readiness (Wijaya & Paramartha, 2023). First, emotive-attitudinal readiness is a readiness that individuals have in managing their feelings or emotions during learning, for instance individuals are ready to learn with high enthusiasm and under any circumstances (Wijaya & Paramartha, 2023). Second, cognitive readiness is a readiness that relates to students' ability to learn, for example, students' knowledge, motivation, mental, and their belief in doing or learning something (Wijaya & Paramartha, 2023). Third, behavioral readiness is readiness that relates to students' habit or behavior in the learning that supports their learning process, such as students' readiness in managing their study time (Wijaya & Paramartha, 2023).

Several studies were conducted to examine the benefits and importance of parental involvement in supporting children education. Santiago (2025) examined parental involvement and the academic progress of kindergarten students in the Philippines. The findings indicated that a lack of parental involvement in children's learning contributed to obstruction in their academic development. Various barriers identified by parents included limited time with their children and a lack of knowledge about how to facilitate learning at home. Thus result the students with low parent involvement remained at the "Beginning" academic level while

they should be at "Developing" level. Similar results were also identified by Herath (2024), there were improvements in students' academic performance, social skills, and emotional well-being within parents who were involved in their children's education. Another study which more specifically examined parental involvement in language development conducted by Gay (2025). Through a comparative synthesis of bilingual and monolingual children, he found that students with bilingual parents showed better language advancement compared to those raised by monolingual parents. This is due to students with bilingual parents were able to communicate in English, which helped parents to assist their children in learning. Bilngual parents were active in communication and guiding their children's learning at school since they did not face language barriers.

While multiple studies have emphasized the importance of parental involvement, there remains a lack of in-depth understanding of how parental involvement particularly influences students' readiness in early bilingual contexts. Hence, the aim of this study is to explore the role of parental involvement on students' readiness in early bilingual education. This study is designed to address the following research questions: (1) How does parental involvement influence students' readiness for bilingual learning? and (2) In what ways do different forms of parental involvement affect early bilingual development?

Method

This study employs a case study method to thoroughly explore a particular case and gather detailed information from multiple sources. Following Yin (2009), this study was inspired by the phenomena in the context of real-world occurrences. A variety of data collection techniques were employed to explore parents' roles on their kindergarten-aged children in developing their bilingual skills at Doremi Preschool in Denpasar, Bali. Doremi is one of bilingual school which implement Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) a national curriculum framework in Australia. This study involved six kindergarten students aged 5-6 years old as well as their parents. Parents came from varied backgrounds, covering from low to middle income. Parents' education levels varied from high school to university degrees. Moreover, parents profession included professionals, civil servant, and small business owners. Teacher suggestions were used to determine the level of involvement of six parents, who were then purposefully chosen. Two parents who were highly involved (HI), two parents who were moderately involved (MI), and two parents who were lowly involved (LI) were included in this selection. Teachers' recommendations were made based on observations during 2 terms. Within the academic year of 2024. Teachers see parents' activities for these 2 things, such as attendance at parent-teacher meetings and activities of asking teachers about

children's progress at school.

Data collection techniques used in this research include semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher and six parent representatives of varying levels of involvement. Interviews were done in different day and lasted 45-60 minutes for each parents. This semi-structured interview was conducted to collect information regarding parents involvement in their children's bilingual education. This interview uses questions created based on Epstain's Parental Involvement Framework. The questions focus on six key areas: parenting, communication, collaboration, home learning, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Apart from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations were also carried out by researchers with the help of the class teacher. This observation was carried out for two weeks during the third term of learning at school. In this observation the researcher used a Likert scale to make it easier to observe students. Researchers categorized the scale into five levels: (1) not ready, (2) somewhat ready, (3) quite ready, (4) mostly ready, and (5) completely ready. The aspects that will be observed are related to student readiness based on the framework of Fletcher (2004) and Maddox et al. (2000). These aspects include emotional-attitudinal readiness, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness. After collecting data through semi-structured interviews, researchers carried out data analysis. The data analysis used in this research is included in the Miles & Huberman model (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014), namely: 1) reducing data by selecting and summarizing the information obtained so that it fits the research focus, 2) presenting the selected data in the form of narrative to describe the research results, and 3) concluding as the final stage in achieving the research objectives. During the analysis process, researchers set aside prejudices and biases to ensure the findings were based on the participants' experiences.

Results

As mentioned previously, the collected data on parental involvement in early bilingual students in bilingual schools using employed content analysis based on Epstain's six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, home learning, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore how parents were involved in their children's academic activities. Not only that, through this semi-structured interview the researcher attempted to identify practices with reference to Epstain's model. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and supported with researcher notes to gain additional insight. Data were coded to categorize information into segments, detailing the implications for each identified

category based on themes, topics, ideas, terms, phrases, and keywords (Gibbs & Taylor, 2005).

Six major topics emerged from the data regarding parental involvement discussed as follows:

a. Parenting

The parents in this study provided valuable insights regarding their involvement in their children's education, particularly in the context of parenting. The responses revealed similar practices and beliefs, which aligned with Epstein's (2018) framework for parental involvement. The six parents, representing varying levels of involvement (low, medium, and high), demonstrated significant involvement in parenting practices.

In creating a supportive home environment, parents emphasized the importance of establishing a structured routine. For example, P1 from the high involvement group stated:

"Tentu, saya selalu mengatur jadwal kegiatan dan rutinitas anak saya di rumah. Sebisa mungkin, saya menjaga agar jadwal tersebut teratur agar dia juga belajar disiplin. Misalnya, kami memiliki waktu tetap untuk belajar, bermain, dan istirahat setiap harinya."[P1/HI-05-04-24]

["Of course, I always organize my child's schedule and routine at home. As much as possible, I maintain this schedule to help them learn discipline. For example, we have set times for studying, playing, and resting every day."]

This excerpt exemplifies the effort of the parents to support students' learning development. This is not only for the high involved parents but also those who do not have much time to be with their children. This is revealed in the following excerpt of P4 who was in the medium involvement.

"Saya memang tidak banyak waktu dengan anak saya dirumah. Tetapi saya selalu berusaha untuk memberikan yang terbaik untuk menunjang belajar anak saya. Saya menyiapkan buku-buku berbahasa Inggris, youtube kids dengan channel bahasa inggris yang saya rasa dapat membantu anak saya mempelajari bahasa." [P4/MI-04-04-24]

["I do not have much time with my child at home. However, I always try to provide the best support for their learning. I prepare English books and YouTube Kids

channels in English that I believe can help my child learn the language."]

Similarly, P5 from the low involvement group recognized the importance of a regular schedule, noting:

"Kami berusaha menjaga jadwal yang teratur untuk waktu mengerjakan PR dan bermain. Anak saya masih kecil saya tidak ingin terlalu memaksa dia untuk belajar keras tapi kami selalu berusaha untuk menemaninya dirumah." [P5/LI-07-04-24]

["We try to maintain a regular schedule for homework and   playtime. My child is still young, so I do not want to push them too hard to study, but we always try to be there for them at home."]

These statements highlight a common understanding among parents of different involvement levels regarding the significance of establishing a supportive and structured home environment to facilitate their children's learning.

b. Communicating

The parents in this study exhibited diverse communication approaches with teachers and school staff, which were influenced by their respective levels of involvement as defined by Epstein (2018). Parents categorized as high and medium involvement maintained regular and open communication with teachers and school staff like front office and accounting staff. They recognized the importance of staying informed about their child's progress and actively sought opportunities to engage with teachers. P2, a high involvement parent, emphasized this proactive approach:

"Saya sering sekali nge-WA missnya untuk menanyakan kesulitan apa yang anak saya alami di sekolah. Selain itu kalau   ada acara disekolah saya selalu bertanya seperti kostum apa yang akan dipakai, apakah ada lagu yang harus anak saya hafalkan atau mungkin tarian yang harus dihafalkan saya biasanya tanya dan minta video atau musiknya untuk berlatih dirumah." [P2/HI-05-04-24]

["I often message the teacher to ask about any difficulties my child is experiencing at school. Additionally, if there are events at school, I always inquire about details such as what costume will be worn, whether there are songs my child needs to memorize, or dances they need to learn. I usually ask for videos or music to practice at home."]

Both parents from the high and medium involvement group expressed similar sentiments, stating that they always want to be informed about their child's progress at school, even though the school provides weekly reports on their child's development. Parents in the low involvement groups communicated with teachers infrequently and primarily in response to specific needs or issues at school. P5, a low involvement parent, described their approach:

"Kami berkomunikasi dengan guru saat ada hal penting atau jika kami memiliki pertanyaan. Tidak sebiasa orangtua lainnya, tapi kami tetap berhubungan sesuai kebutuhan." [P5/LI-07-04-24]

["We communicate with the teacher when there's something important or if we have questions. It's not as regular as some other parents, but we stay in touch as needed."]

Similarly, another parent categorized as low involvement also relied more on the school's initiatives to communicate information about their child's progress. P6, a low involvement parent, reflected this approach:

"Kami biasanya berkomunikasi dengan guru selama konferensi orangtua-guru atau jika sekolah menghubungi kami mengenai sesuatu yang spesifik. Selain itu, kami percayakan sekolah untuk mengelola komunikasi sehari-hari." [P6/LI-07-04-24]

["We usually communicate with the teacher during parent-teacher conferences or if the school contacts us about something specific. Otherwise, we trust the school to manage day-to-day communication."]

The findings suggest that the level of parental involvement in communication with teachers varies significantly among parents in this study. High and medium involvement parents tend to maintain ongoing communication to stay informed and actively support their child's educational journey. In contrast, low involvement parents communicate less frequently, focusing on specific needs or concerns.

c. Volunteering

In this form of involvement, it is expected that the role of parents may be more intense, i.e. as resource persons or volunteer teachers in the classroom. In the interview results, all representative parents from the high, medium, and low involvement groups indicated that they were not involved in this volunteering

involvement. Most of the parents said that they did not have the time to participate in such activities and lacked the necessary skills to engage in school activities related to the second language, which is English.

"Saya tidak bisa bahasa inggris miss. Jadi saya tidak bisa menjadi perwakilan orangtua untuk acara-acara di sekolah yang berkaitan dengan bahasa inggris. Saya menyekolahkan anak saya di bilingual school supaya mereka tidak seperti saya dan saya sambil belajar bahasa inggris." [P3/MI-04-04-24]

["I cannot speak English, Miss. So, I cannot represent parents for school events related to English. I enroll my children in a bilingual school so they will not be like me, and I am learning English while they are studying."]

"Kalau untuk acara sekolah saya memang jarang datang miss karena saya kerja. Palingan saya kalau anak saya perform saja saya usahakan datang miss. Ambil rapor saja saya harus ijin ditempat kerja saya dulu miss." [P5/LI-07-04-24]

"Miss, I rarely attend school events because of work. I usually only try to come when my child is performing. Even for report card day, I have to ask for permission from my workplace first."

Therefore, it can be concluded that representatives of parents from high, medium, and low involvement levels are not well-involved in volunteering activities in their children's education due to busyness and lack of language proficiency.

d. Learning at home

From the results of interviews with six parents from the high, medium, and low involvement groups, it was found that parents in the medium and low involvement groups expressed that they were not heavily involved in their children's learning at home. The primary reasons cited for this limited involvement were difficulties in understanding the educational material and language barriers. These challenges made it difficult for parents to provide effective assistance with homework and other academic tasks.

"Saya merasa kurang dalam membimbing anak saya belajar bahasa dirumah. Karena saya takut salah dalam mengucapkan kata-kata dalam bahasa inggris. Namun saya selalu memberi tontonan dalam bahasa inggris melalui Youtube." [P6/LI-07-04-24]

["I feel inadequate in guiding my child to learn English at home because I am afraid of mispronouncing English words. However, I always provide English-language videos through YouTube."]

The same thing was said by P5 from the low involvement group, stating that they lacked confidence in teaching their child in English. However, they still guide and review their child's materials such as writing and tracing lines. In contrast, parents from the high involvement group help their child's learning at home by reviewing materials while playing. P2 from the high involvement group said:

"Saya ajari anak saya di rumah meskipun hanya hal-hal simpel seperti menyebutkan kata-kata sambil bermain. Namun bahasa yang saya pakai tetap bahasa Indonesia." [P5/LI-07-04-24]

["I teach my child at home, even though it's just simple things like naming things while playing. However, the language I use is still Bahasa."]

Based on the interview results related to learning at home, it can be seen that parents' language proficiency affects the learning obtained by children at home.

e. Decision-making
The interviews conducted with representative parents from the high, medium, and low involvement groups revealed a consistent pattern of high involvement in decision-making concerning their children's language learning at school. Even though the parents are not proficient in English, they said they always choose English-language videos and reading materials on YouTube.

"Ya, meskipun saya tidak terlalu mahir berbahasa Inggris, saya selalu memastikan untuk memilih video dan buku berbahasa Inggris untuk anak saya. Saya percaya penting bagi mereka untuk terbiasa mendengar dan membaca bahasa Inggris, meskipun saya sendiri tidak bisa mengajarkan mereka." [P2/HI-05-04-24]

["Yes, although I am not very good at English, I always make sure to choose English-language videos   and books for my child. I believe it's important for them to get used to hearing and reading English, even if I can't teach them myself."]

The consistent pattern of high parental involvement in decision-making regarding language learning, as observed in the interviews, highlights the positive

impact of parental support. By choosing English-language videos and reading materials, parents contribute significantly to their children's language development and overall academic success. Addressing the challenges faced by parents with limited English proficiency can further enhance these efforts and ensure that all children receive the support they need to thrive in a bilingual environment.

f. Collaborating with the community

The interviews with two parents, categorized as high and medium involvement respectively, revealed several key themes about the "Collaborating with the Community" aspect of Epstein's parental involvement framework. Notably, parents from both high and medium involvement groups exhibit good collaboration with the school community, similar to the positive experiences highlighted in the communicating aspect of the framework. For instance, both groups of parents consistently ask about their children's educational progress, ensuring they stay well-informed and engaged. The results from the interviews underscore the significant impact of effective collaboration between parents and the school community on student outcomes. Both parents, regardless of their level of involvement, emphasized the importance of regular and proactive communication with the school. This aligns with Epstein's framework, which highlights the critical role of strong home-school partnerships in fostering student success. The interviews indicate that both high and medium involvement parents experience positive outcomes from collaborating with the school community. Effective communication, active participation, and a proactive approach are key elements that contribute to successful collaboration.

Students' Readiness

The observation instrument for early bilingual children focuses on language use in the classroom, utilizing theories of emotive-attitudinal readiness, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness from Fletcher (2004) and Maddox et al. (2000). These frameworks encompass various domains crucial for holistic development, with an emphasis on language proficiency and communication skills. Emotive-attitudinal readiness is assessed through engagement level, emotional stability, and self-confidence, which are integral to effective language use and development. Cognitive readiness is evaluated through attention span, problem-solving skills, and understanding instructions, essential for comprehending and expressing ideas in both languages. These skills are foundational for academic success and adaptation in bilingual education contexts (Fletcher, 2004; Maddox et al., 2000).

Behavioral readiness is measured by interaction with peers and respect for

rules, crucial for practicing language skills in social contexts. Physical readiness, including motor skills and energy levels, also plays a role in the physical aspects of language use, such as articulation and movement (Fletcher, 2004; Maddox et al., 2000). Parental involvement has been identified as a significant independent variable that influences students' motivation and academic achievement (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005). Based on the observations conducted in the classroom, students with varying levels of parental involvement in early bilingual education demonstrate different readiness levels across several key aspects.

Figure 1 Likert Scale Score of Readiness Observation

Parent Code	Interview Key Code	Student Code	Emotive-attitudinal	Cognitive	Behavioral
P1/HI	I always organize my child's schedule and routine at home.	S1	4	5	5
P2/HI	I often message the teacher to ask about any difficulties my child is experiencing at school.	S2	5	5	4
P3/MI	I do not have much time with my child at home.	S3	4	3	4
P4/MI	I cannot speak English.	S4	3	4	4
P5/LI	We communicate with the teacher when there's something important or if we have questions.	S5	3	2	3
P6/LI	Miss, I rarely attend school events because of	S6	3	3	4

	work.				

HI: High Involvement
MI: Medium Involvement
LI: Low Involvement
S1: Student 1
S2: Student 2
S3: Student 3
S4: Student 4
S5: Student 5
S6: Student 6

In terms of academic engagement, students with high parental involvement often participate actively in activities related to language learning, whereas those with low and medium parental involvement sometimes participate. Similarly, across all parental involvement levels, students demonstrate only occasional positive interactions with peers in both languages. However, students with high and medium parental involvement frequently apply problem-solving skills in tasks related to language learning, indicating a higher level of cognitive readiness. Regarding academic performance, students from high parental involvement demonstrate good performance, while those from low and medium parental involvement show average performance. This suggests a positive correlation between parental involvement and academic outcomes in bilingual education. Furthermore, students from high parental involvement exhibit high self-confidence in using both languages, whereas students from low and medium parental involvement demonstrate moderate confidence.

Motivation in learning languages appears consistent across all parental involvement levels, with students showing good interest in learning. This indicates that motivation may not vary significantly based on parental involvement alone but is generally maintained at a positive level across the board.

Discussion

The findings underscore the significant impact of parental involvement on various aspects of early bilingual students' readiness for language learning, aligned with emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral readiness theories. Higher levels of parental involvement are associated with increased academic engagement, better problem-solving skills, higher academic performance, and greater self-confidence in language use. These insights suggest that fostering parental

involvement in bilingual education can contribute significantly to enhancing students' readiness and success in language learning. Furthermore, from the results and discussion outlined, it can be concluded that there is a need to conduct parent-teacher meetings due to the existence of parents who do not actively communicate with teachers and rely solely on parent-teacher conferences to understand their children's progress. By holding parent-teacher conferences, students' readiness can be enhanced.

Teachers also need to be provided with training to effectively communicate with parents who have limited time and face language barriers. This study also highlights social factors that impact parental involvement. Many parents have demanding work schedule or have limited English proficiency, which prevents them from being involved in assisting their children. This can be evidenced by students whose parents demonstrate high involvement in communication and collaboration with the school community, showing better readiness.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, parental involvement emerges as a crucial factor in determining early bilingual students' readiness. The research found that parents who are highly involved tend to influence their children' readiness compared to those with lower levels of parental involvement. Among the six areas of parental involvement identified by Epstein's framework, all parents showed high involvement in parenting and decision-making. However, only parents with high and medium involvement also demonstrated significant impact on their children development in communicating abilities. Meanwhile, only high involvement parents were actively engaged in learning at home. From this, it can be concluded that learning at home has a significant influence on students' readiness. Medium and low involvement parents expressed difficulties in supporting learning at home due to language barriers and a lack of understanding of their children's materials. This suggests that parents' language proficiency can also impact students' readiness in bilingual education. These findings are consistent with other research that emphasizes the importance of a nurturing and supportive home environment in fostering successful students.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the role of parental involvement in early bilingual education and offers practical recommendations for educators and policymakers. Enhancing parental involvement can help schools better support early bilingual students, ultimately leading to improved educational experiences and outcomes. Future research could explore additional factors influencing parental involvement and investigate effective strategies to address the barriers identified in this study, ensuring that all parents can effectively support

their children's bilingual education.

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