



Parents' English Experience as The Induction of EFL Students' English Competence

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Abstract

This study examines the role of parents' English language experience in shaping the English competence of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. It focuses on how parental involvement, regardless of their English proficiency, supports their children's English development. The research also explores how parents' educational background, parent-child relationships, and the level of parental involvement contribute to children's motivation and progress in learning English. Using a qualitative approach, this study investigates how parents with varying levels of English experience contribute to their children's language learning. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with four 12th-grade students, selected based on their relevance to the study. These students come from families with different educational backgrounds and English language experience. The interviews were semi-structured, focusing on students' experiences in learning English, the support they receive from their parents, and how their parents' English language experience shapes their learning process. In addition to the interviews, documentation such as students' report cards and parents' salary slips were analyzed to provide context regarding the socio-economic background. The findings show that parental involvement, regardless of their English proficiency, plays a significant role in students' English development. Parents with limited English experience still provide moral support, emphasize the importance of English for the future, and create a supportive learning environment. The study suggests that schools should enhance parental involvement by offering training and resources, particularly for parents with limited educational backgrounds and English experience, to improve the learning ecosystem and support English learning more effectively.

Keywords: *Parental Involvement; English Language Experience; EFL students; Language Development*

Introduction

Parental involvement has always been an important part of children's education. Even before entering formal schooling, children already learn many things—such as behaviour, values, and basic skills—at home with their parents as the main role models (Alifiani & Widodo, 2022). In countries where English is not the main language, like Indonesia, the role of parents becomes even more important, especially when it comes to helping children learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). As explained by Walgiyanti and Setiawati (2022), parents can support their children's learning in many ways, from helping with schoolwork to creating a home environment that supports learning. This involvement has a strong effect not only on academic achievement but also on motivation and long-term success.

Indonesia still faces many challenges in improving students' English skills. Based on the EF (2023), Indonesia is ranked 79th out of 113 countries, which places it in the "low proficiency" category. This situation shows that English learning through school education alone may not be enough. Many students need extra support outside of class, and one important source of that support is their parents. However, the help parents can give may depend on how much experience they have with English themselves. Some parents may have studied or used English before, while others may not. These differences may lead to different levels of support, learning exposure, and progress in their children's English development. Socioeconomic factors also play a role in shaping the kind of support parents can provide. Families with higher income or educational levels may have better access to English materials, private tutoring, or international programs, while families with limited resources may struggle to provide similar opportunities.

According to Bandura (1986), children learn a lot by observing people around them, especially their parents. When parents show interest or skill in using English, their children may also be encouraged to use and learn the language. Epstein (2002) also highlights the importance of family support in children's education. These two theories show that parents' past experiences with English—whether through school, work, or daily life—can influence how they support their children in learning the language.

Several studies have supported the idea that parents play a big role in their children's English learning. Mukhlis (2023) found that parents with higher education levels often create a home environment that supports reading and language use. Adrdelean and Erdeli (2022) also mentioned that parents who were successful in their own education tend to build their children's confidence and thinking skills. Kalaycı (2018) showed how parental involvement in English learning could improve children's performance. Zuhrina et al. (2018) added that a

strong parent-child relationship and the parent's education background influence how helpful parental support is.

However, there is still a lack of research that looks specifically at how parents' own experiences with learning or using English affect their children's English competence. Many previous studies talk about parental involvement in general but do not focus on the kind of help that comes from parents who have personal experience with English. The way parents approach English learning at home, the tools they use, and the encouragement they give may all be shaped by whether or not they have learned English themselves. These aspects are important to explore, especially in EFL settings like Indonesia, where school support alone might not be enough. This research aims to fill that gap by exploring how parents' English experience influences the way they support their children's English development at home.

This research uses the term *EFL competence* to refer to a student's ability to understand and use English in speaking, listening, reading, and writing—both in academic settings and daily life. The term *parental English experience* refers to any past involvement parents have had with English, such as formal education, work, overseas experience, or self-study. To explore this topic, this research aims to answer the following questions: (1) To what extent does the parents' English experience induce their children's English competence as EFL learners? (2) In what ways do parents with English experience facilitate the development of their children's English competence?

It is expected that parents who have stronger English backgrounds—through education or experience—will be able to provide more effective support for their children's English development. This may include structured language exposure at home, use of learning materials, and verbal interaction in English. By answering the research questions, this research hopes to offer a clearer understanding of how parents' personal English learning histories influence their children's language learning outcomes. It highlights the importance of not just involving parents, but also recognizing how their individual experiences and resources shape the kind of support they can give. The results of this research are expected to support the development of more inclusive and equitable family-based language learning strategies, especially in contexts where English is still considered a foreign language.

Method

This research employs a qualitative research design to explore how parents' English experiences induce their children's English proficiency as EFL learners. Qualitative research is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and contexts. In the context of this research, qualitative research provides the flexibility to delve into the personal and

contextual factors shaping the parents' and children's interactions with English. In the approach, the research adopts a case study approach, which is well-suited for examining the specific experiences of individual families and their unique contributions to their children's English language development.

A case study allows the researcher to focus on the particularities of the subject matter, making it a fitting method for understanding the detailed and specific ways in which parents' language experiences and the support they provide induce their children's EFL competence. This combination of qualitative research and a case study approach is effective in addressing the research questions, as it enables the researcher to provide a thorough and contextually grounded analysis of the inducements parents exert on their children's EFL development.

The research involves data collection through two primary methods: interviews and documentation. The interviews serve as the main source of data, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the students' experiences with English language learning and the role their parents' English proficiency plays in their learning process. The documentation method complements the interviews by providing concrete data on students' academic performance and their parents' socioeconomic background. These documents include students' English report cards and parents' pay slips, both of which offer insights into the students' progress in English and the resources available to support their learning.

Focuses on four 12th-grade students, selected based on their English performance as reported by their teachers and their parents' ability to support their education. The data gathered from these students and their parents offer a comprehensive understanding of how the parents' background, experience, and resources contribute to their children's English language acquisition. The parental background includes information such as occupation, income, place of residence, educational background, and English experience.

Data collection techniques are designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research topic. Interviews with the students and their parents are structured in a semi-structured format, allowing for flexibility in exploring key themes while ensuring that the questions address the research aims. The interviews are conducted face-to-face and recorded for accurate transcription and analysis. Documentation, including students' report cards and parents' pay slips, helps triangulate the findings from the interviews by providing tangible evidence of the students' progress and the resources available for learning support.

For data analysis, this research employs thematic analysis, a widely-used method in qualitative research that helps identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data. The analysis follows a six-step process as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006), which involves transcribing and reviewing the data multiple times,

coding the data to identify key themes, grouping these codes into broader themes, and ensuring the themes accurately represent the data. Each theme is defined and named clearly to capture its distinct meaning, and relevant examples from the data are used to support the analysis. This method allows the researcher to draw meaningful connections between the parents' English experiences and the students' language development.

To ensure the validity of the research, expert validation is employed. Two experts in qualitative research and language teaching will review the interview questions, data collection procedures, and analysis methods. Their feedback will be used to refine the research instruments and analysis process, ensuring that the findings are both credible and reliable. This process helps maintain the trustworthiness of the research and ensures that the conclusions drawn are based on valid data interpretations.

Results

Induction of Parents' English Experience

This research finds the role of parental involvement in students' English learning is examined. One respondent noted, "My father used to work in a company that often met with foreigners, so he understands a little English, although not fluently." [*"Ayah saya pernah kerja di perusahaan yang sering bertemu dengan orang luar negeri, jadi dia ngerti sedikit bahasa Inggris, walaupun nggak lancar"*] (respondent 2, q2). Another student mentioned, "My parents didn't speak English, but they always supported me to learn." [*"Orang tua saya nggak bisa bahasa Inggris ya, tapi mereka selalu support saya untuk belajar"*] (respondent 4, q2).

This indicates that even with limited English proficiency, parents emphasized the extent of learning English and provided motivation for their children. Parents' induction on students' perception of English learning was evident, as many students expressed that their parents' encouragement significantly shaped their enthusiasm for language acquisition. Furthermore, parents often associated English proficiency with better career opportunities and personal growth, reinforcing students' commitment to improving their language skills.

Researcher also explores home-based literacy support. Parents who lacked fluency in English often compensated by providing learning materials. One respondent stated, "My parents bought grammar books and dictionaries and installed Wi-Fi for internet access so that I could search for materials on YouTube or websites." [*"Orang tua saya beli buku grammar, kamus, dan juga pasangin Wi-Fi untuk akses internet supaya saya bisa cari materi di YouTube atau website"*] (respondent 1, q6) Another participant noted, "They helped me by buying textbooks and giving me access to English learning apps like Duolingo."

[*" Mereka membantu saya dengan membeli buku-buku pelajaran dan*

memberikan akses ke aplikasi belajar bahasa Inggris seperti Duolingo] (respondent 3, q6). This shows that parents contributed to their children's education by facilitating access to learning resources, even if they were not directly involved in language instruction. Many students reported that accessing English materials at home provided them with opportunities for independent learning. Some parents also engage their children in indirect language learning activities, such as encouraging them to watch English movies or listen to English songs. This helped reinforce language skills in a non-academic setting. This informal exposure was beneficial in familiarizing students with English vocabulary and pronunciation, making them more confident in using the language.

Another important aspect revealed in the research was the role of parents in setting educational goals and expectations. Other respondents answered "You should be more than us" [*Kamu harus bisa lebih dari kita*] (respondent 2, q2) and "My parents often said that English is very important for the future." [*Orang tua saya sering bilang kalau bahasa Inggris itu penting banget buat masa depan*] (respondent 1, q3) it found that their parents set clear expectations regarding their English learning progress, motivating them to strive for excellence. Parents actively monitoring their children's academic performance often encouraged structured study habits, which led to improved learning outcomes as said by respondent answer, "My parents don't accompany me directly when I use the app, but they often ask, 'Have you learned anything' or 'What's new?'" [*Orang tua saya nggak menemani saya langsung pas pakai aplikasi, tapi mereka sering tanya, 'Udah belajar apa' atau 'Gimana, ada yang baru nggak?'*] (respondent 1, q9) Moreover, parents who regularly converse about English learning with their children helped create a sense of accountability, making students more diligent in their studies.

Facilities Provision

This research highlights the provision of learning resources. Parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds approached English education in varied ways. One respondent shared, "I took English lessons twice weekly to prepare for the TOEFL. It costs around Rp250,000 per month." [*Saya ikut les bahasa Inggris dua kali seminggu buat persiapan TOEFL. Biayanya sekitar Rp250.000 per bulan*] (respondent 2, q8) Another student mentioned, "I learn more through apps like Duolingo or BBC Learning English." [*Saya lebih banyak belajar lewat aplikasi kayak Duolingo atau BBC Learning English*] (respondent 1, q8). This demonstrates that while some families could afford structured courses, others relied on free or low-cost alternatives to support their children's English development. Some students from lower-income families emphasized the importance of free online resources, which allowed them to continue learning despite financial constraints.

Meanwhile, students whose parents enrolled them in private English courses appreciated the structured learning environment and professional guidance. Other respondent also shared their experiences, "In international classes, I feel quite comfortable because almost everything is in English. So, over time, I got used to it and wasn't embarrassed to say or ask things in English." [*Di kelas internasional, saya merasa cukup nyaman karena semuanya hampir pakai bahasa Inggris. Jadi, lama-lama saya jadi terbiasa dan nggak malu lagi buat ngomong atau tanya sesuatu dalam bahasa Inggris*] (respondent 3, q10) another also said "I feel quite comfortable in English extracurricular activities because we learn in a relaxed and fun way" [*Saya merasa cukup nyaman di ekskul Bahasa Inggris, karena di sana kita belajar dengan cara yang santai dan seru*] (respondent 4, q10) it points out that some parents invested in international school programs or extracurricular activities that provided more immersive English exposure, further enhancing their children's linguistic capabilities.

The results highlight the varying degrees of parental involvement and the different strategies employed to support students' English learning. While some parents could provide direct assistance, others focused on creating a conducive learning environment through resource provision and encouragement. The impact of these efforts was evident in students' motivation, confidence, and overall language development. The next section will discuss these findings in further detail.

Discussion

Parents' English Background and Involvement

This discussion looked at how parents' experiences with English—whether from school, work, or daily life—help their children learn the language. It also explored how parents support their kids with learning resources like books, apps, and courses. Another important factor was how parents' financial situation and education level affect the help they can give. This analysis helps explain how parents induct their children's English learning.

The result shows that how much parents are involved in their children's English learning is closely linked to their own experiences with the language. (Wahyuningsih & Mua'dib, 2023) said parents who have used English in their daily lives or jobs are likelier to help their children learn it. Even if parents are not fluent, they can share their experiences to show their children why English is important. For example, some parents tell their kids about using English at work, encouraging them to learn. One student said their father, who wasn't fluent, often told them, "English is very important for your future." These kinds of messages help motivate children to learn. Even when parents don't know English well, they can still play a big role by encouraging their children. Parents don't need to speak English to create a positive learning environment. (Salsabila et al., 2024) stated parents who believe in their children's ability to learn and show interest in their progress help them stay

motivated. This agrees with other research that shows encouragement from parents can boost a child's confidence and willingness to learn. Parents who provide an encouraging atmosphere at home often help their children develop a sense of perseverance, even when learning English feels difficult.

Encouragement and Motivation from Parents

This research also highlights how important it is for children to have a good learning environment at home, even if their parents do not speak English fluently. Parents can support learning by providing books, apps, and internet access. For example, one student said their parents bought grammar books and set up Wi-Fi so they could access English learning materials online. Another student said they used apps like Duolingo to practice. When parents provide these resources, they help their children take charge of their own learning.

In addition to books and digital resources, some parents help their children by creating opportunities to practice English at home. They might encourage their children to watch English-language movies or TV shows, listen to English music, or even try to communicate in English during daily conversations. Even if inconsistent, small efforts can help children feel more comfortable using the language.

This research found that parents who understand the extent of English in their children's future are more likely to invest in formal learning, such as private courses. Azizi and Yusuf (2024) said these lessons can be helpful because they focus on important skills like speaking and test preparation. Some students said their parents paid for TOEFL preparation classes. These structured lessons allow students to practice English in a focused way, helping them improve. Many parents who send their children to private lessons see it as an essential investment in their education and future career opportunities. Additionally, private tutors or language canters often provide customized learning approaches that suit the child's strengths and weaknesses, which can be more effective than traditional school lessons.

Parents who see English as a key to future opportunities are more likely to pay for courses. The study shows that this investment often leads to better language skills. When parents prioritise English learning, they help their children build valuable skills for the future. This includes better communication skills, increased chances of studying abroad, and stronger job prospects in fields that require English proficiency. Parents who do not have the financial means to enrol their children in private lessons still contribute by encouraging self-study methods. Some parents encourage their children to set personal learning goals, such as reading an English book every month, writing in an English journal, or practising speaking with friends.

Technology and Immersion Exposure

Besides formal lessons, many parents give their children access to online tools and apps that help them learn English. This study found that parents supported their children by subscribing to language-learning apps or encouraging them to use free resources like Duolingo. These tools help children practice English flexibly and conveniently Evurulobi et al. (2024) The ability to learn English at any time and from anywhere makes these digital resources highly effective for busy students. Parents monitoring their children's progress with these apps may notice improved vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills. Apps and websites can make learning fun and interactive.

Students said they used these tools to build their vocabulary, grammar, and listening skills. Having these resources at home gives children more chances to practice. However, the study also shows that encouragement from parents is what keeps children using these tools regularly (He et al., 2024). When parents remind their children to use these apps, they help them stay on track with their learning. Some parents also set schedules for their children, ensuring they dedicate daily time to improving their English. This structured approach helps children develop discipline and long-term learning habits.

Finally, this research examined how international programs or English immersion classes help children use English in real-life situations. These programs create an environment where students must speak and listen to English daily. Some students in the study said they felt more confident in English after being in such programs. They said learning in a setting where English was used regularly made them feel comfortable with the language. Immersion programs are particularly effective because they provide real-world language exposure. Unlike traditional classroom settings, immersion programs encourage students to think and communicate in English naturally, which speeds up language acquisition.

Parents who believe in the benefits of these programs encourage their children to join them. The research found that parents who value English immersion play a big role in helping their children gain confidence in speaking. By enrolling their children in these classes or encouraging them to join extracurricular English activities, parents help their children improve their language skills naturally and effectively. Some parents even participate in their children's language learning journey by attending language exchange events or practising conversations at home. This active participation helps children see English as a useful skill rather than just a school subject.

Parents' role in their children's English learning goes beyond just providing resources. Their encouragement, belief in the extent of English, and willingness to create practice opportunities all contribute significantly to their children's language development. Whether through formal education, digital tools, or daily

conversations, parents have a lasting impact on how well their children learn and use English. By understanding how they can support their children's learning, parents can play a key role in shaping their future success in English proficiency.

Conclusion

This research explores the role that parents' English language experiences play in shaping their children's ability to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The findings indicate that parental involvement—regardless of the parents' own English proficiency—contributes significantly to children's motivation and engagement in English learning. Parents support their children by providing access to resources such as books, educational apps, and internet connection, fostering a home environment that promotes independent learning. Even without fluency in English, parents who consistently express the value of learning English contribute meaningfully to their children's positive attitudes and persistence in EFL learning.

The research also reveals that socioeconomic and educational background influences the form of support provided. Parents with higher incomes are often able to afford private English lessons or enrolment in international classes. However, the research also shows that parents with limited financial means demonstrate resourcefulness by utilizing free or low-cost materials such as mobile apps, online videos, and websites. This highlights that a parent's financial capacity does not necessarily determine their level of involvement; rather, their commitment to education and belief in the importance of English learning are more decisive factors.

Furthermore, the quality of the parent-child relationship emerges as a crucial element in sustaining children's language learning efforts. Emotional engagement from parents—even without direct assistance in English—helps maintain children's motivation and confidence. A supportive atmosphere where parents ask questions about learning progress or encourage children to keep trying plays a key role in fostering a positive learning experience. Future research may investigate specific strategies for involving parents in EFL learning in different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to examine how forms of parental support evolve over time and how they impact students' language development in the long term.

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