

Students' Perspectives on Their Parents' Involvement in Their L2 English Learning

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Abstract

In the past few years, parental involvement as an important factor in students' English learning had been investigated. Though parents might feel like they were contributing to their children's English learning, how their children really felt toward their involvement was another aspect that needs to be investigated. In response to this, this research investigated the students' perspectives on their parents' involvement in their L2 English learning using a descriptive case study design. The findings revealed that students perceived parental involvement as important. The students' attitudes were also found to be mostly positive. Furthermore, most of the students stated that there were some kinds of parental involvement that they wished their parents had done to help them achieve their goals in their English learning, namely sending to an English camp and studying English at home. Accordingly, this study suggested that parents should have paid more attention to what their children wanted when it came to their English learning, especially when their children were mature enough to understand the importance of English and when they knew what they wanted in their English learning.

Keywords: parental involvement; students' perspectives; L2 English learning; English course; English camp, learning English with parents

Introduction

The significance of English in economic activities and career progress had caused a greater demand for the use of English in Indonesia (Gunantar, [2016](#)). Consequently, the government gave substantial attention to some pedagogy in relation to English language teaching, such as the methodology, curriculum, and evaluation to improve the students' English competency (Mappiasse & Sihes, [2014](#)). However, many students did not rely only on the English learning they got from school since the English language teaching in Indonesia was still far from being successful (Gunantar, [2016](#)). This could be seen from the fact that many Indonesian students made high scores on English proficiency tests but still had difficulties in communicating in English. In addition, many students still needed additional courses outside the school to improve their English proficiency. This is why, besides the help from their teachers at school, students also needed help from their parents at home. Harji, Balakrishnan, & Letchumanan ([2017](#)) concluded that it took two important educators; parents at home and teachers in school together for a common objective to develop the children's reading ability in English.

Parental involvement could be defined as the collaboration parents made in order to understand children in a correct way as well as to intervene in the educational field by acting as decision-makers, supporters, and assistants (Lee, [2015](#)). Hoang ([2007](#)) described it as the scope of how much parents were dedicated to, interested in, knowledgeable about, and participating in their child's life. Epstein & Sheldon ([2002](#)) also described parenting as an awareness of every step of child growth and development. Parental involvement was seen as important for children, parents, and society (Gray, [2000](#)). It was seen as a factor that had many positive effects on students such as academic improvements, increased motivation, as well as increased self-esteem and self-reliance (Martinez, [2015](#)). In addition, children's learning was promoted when parents perform encouraging activities such as using television judiciously, reading together with children, communicating positive values, and delivering encouragements (Lachat, [1994](#)).

Though parents might feel like they were contributing to their children's English learning, how their children really felt toward their involvement was another aspect that needed to be investigated. For example, a study conducted by Al-Taneiji ([2008](#)) found that some students did not like it when their parents were studying with them because they felt that they were old enough to work independently. Moreover, a wealth of studies on parental involvement had been in the recent decades (e.g., Gray, [2000](#); Al-Taneiji, [2008](#); Erdener & Knoeppel, [2018](#), and many more). Many even specifically focused on parents' perspectives, such as a study conducted by Erdener & Knoeppel ([2018](#)) and teachers' & staffs' perspectives of parental involvement like research conducted by Farah ([2015](#)) and Erdener ([2016](#)). However, to the best of my knowledge, there was not much research that studied students' perspectives on parental involvement, especially in Indonesia even though it was important to know what students really needed and wanted from their parents' involvement. The previously conducted studies also tended to use a survey design with questionnaire as the data collection tool. For these reasons, I was interested in conducting this case study research entitled "Students' Perspectives on Their Parents' Involvement in Their L2 English Learning" using interview as the data collection tool to get more in-depth data in a one-to-one basis. Based on this reason, I was interested in".

Based on the issue stated, this research proposed three questions, they were:

1. What are the students' perspectives on their parents' involvement?
2. What are the students' attitudes toward their parents' involvement in their L2 English learning?
3. What kind of involvement do the students wish their parents had done in relation to their L2 English learning?

The findings of this research were then expected to provide new information for other researchers about students' perspectives on their parents' involvement in their L2 English learning in Jember, Indonesia, and to become a reference for future researchers in conducting research related to the problem. Furthermore, practically, the findings were also expected to help parents understand about children's perspectives on parental involvement in their L2 English learning. From the findings, parents were hoped to consider taking what their children wanted into account since a positive attitude toward

English learning led to positive outcomes of parental involvement (Kim & Barrett, 2019).

Method

Research Context and Participants

This research was conducted at Global English Training (GET) English course in Jember. The reason for choosing GET English course as the place of the research was because it was a place where parents send their children for additional English courses as a form of parental involvement. Besides, I already got permission from the Head of GET to conduct the research there. Thus, I could get detailed information about the topic being investigated.

The targeted participants of this study were 5 students of GET English course in Jember. By the time this research was conducted, I had been their teacher in the English course for a year. The students belonged to one classroom and they shared the same English proficiency level (lower intermediate). They ranged from grade 10-12 of senior high school. To maintain their anonymity, I assigned a pseudonym for each of the participants in this research.

I chose these students because their parents were seen to care much about their English learning. This could be seen from the fact that the parents enrolled them for additional English classes in the English course. Furthermore, during a meeting, some students stated that their parents would motivate them to attend the classes when they did not feel like going. Other students also stated that their parents would monitor their English scores. These statements made me feel interested in conducting further research about parental involvement seen from the students' perspectives.

Research Design and Data Collection Method

The present study used a descriptive case study which aimed to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2003, p. 13) and then described it as it is. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. There were 9 interview items that I used as the interview guide. The questions are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Interview Guide

No	Questions
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1. What do your parents think about learning English?
 2. Who helps you with your English homework at home? Why?
 3. Who do you ask for help when you face difficulties when learning English? Why?
 4. How would your parents react if you don't study English?
 5. Do your parents think that you should practice your English as much as possible?
 6. In what other ways are your parents involved in your English learning?
 7. What do you think about your parents' involvement in your English learning? Are you satisfied with your parents' involvement in your English learning?
 8. Why?
 9. What kind of involvement do you wish your parents had done in relation to your English learning? Why?
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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted through phone calls and used the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) to avoid misunderstandings. Throughout the interview, I took notes and recorded the participants' utterance. Then, the excerpts of the participants' answers were translated into English.

Data Analysis

This study adopted the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Based on Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the collected data. I went through the six phases of conducting a thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006), they are:

1. Becoming familiar with the data.
In this phase, I tried to understand the collected data by re-reading written notes and transcribing recorded data from the participants.
2. Generating codes.
This phase involved coding interesting features across the entire data. Then, I developed the data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes.
This phase involved examining the codes and gathering them into potential themes and then gathering data relevant to each theme.
4. Reviewing themes.
This phase involved reviewing whether the potential themes appear to form a clear pattern.
5. Defining and renaming themes.
This phase involved organizing the themes into a clear account with an accompanying narrative for each theme.
6. Producing the report.
In this last phase, I wrote the result of the analysis. Then, I constructed a narrative around it.

Findings

The findings of the thematic analysis on students' perspectives on their parents' involvement revealed that there were three emerging themes: (1) students' perspectives on their parents' involvement, (2) students' attitude on their parents' involvement, and (3) parental involvement students wished their parents had done. Based on the data, these themes were then elaborated into six sub-themes as seen in Table 3 of the following.

Table 3. The Aspects of Students' Perspectives on Their Parents' Involvement

No	Themes	Sub-themes
1.	Students' perspectives on their parents' involvement	Parental involvement as an important factor in English learning
2.	Students' attitudes on their parents' involvement	Positive attitudes toward parental involvement Negative attitude toward parental involvement
3.	Parental involvement students wished their parents had done	Sending to an English camp Learning with parents None

These themes and sub-themes were then explained further in the following sub-chapters.

Students' Perspectives on Their Parents' Involvement

From the results of the interview that covered the students' perspectives toward their parents' involvement, one sub-theme emerged. It was parental involvement as an important factor in students' English learning. The students' responses that had been translated into English from Indonesian are presented below.

Excerpt 1:

"Obviously, it's important, miss, because if maybe I wasn't enrolled in the English course, or given English books like that, I might not be able to understand, I might not be good at English. I just know it from school. By going to an English course like that, I gain more knowledge. So, it's very great, very important." (Ian, 2 October 2021)

Excerpt 2:

"It's important because, without my parents, I wouldn't understand English since no one would fund me to learn English. So, it's very important. It's going to be even more difficult to understand English if I didn't study it in the English

course, maybe my English won't be like it is now. Now, I understand it a little bit.” (Genta, 2 October 2021)

Excerpt 3:

“The involvement of my parents is very important, miss. Because even if I am motivated to learn English but if I am not supported and not facilitated, I won't be as motivated.” (Dinda, 3 October 2021)

Excerpt 4:

“It's important. It's also in line with my dream. I also have a dream to leave Indonesia, for university. So, in my opinion, my parents have done what they could. Even though they can't assist me directly or practice English with me, they've already tried to provide facilities as well as emotional support and that's okay, that's enough. Because also, sometimes there are students who have big dreams, but they are not supported. There are students who are also self-taught in learning English and they also need support from their parents. Sometimes, there are still parents who think that if we study English, for example, we don't love Indonesia. Even though the child has been trying to learn English by themselves and they don't ask to be enrolled in an English course, too. So, in my opinion, parents' role in learning English is important, even if they don't provide facilities in the form of enrolling in an English course or something, at least emotionally, the child must always be supported.” (Riani, 4 October 2021)

Excerpt 5:

“There would be a difference if I was not supported. Because it's my parents who make me feel motivated and try to always learn English. Maybe if their support wasn't this big, my motivation will still be big, but it won't be based on something greater, you know. It's like, I'm doing this for myself but if, for example, they always support me, there is additional motivation that 'I have to succeed' to be able to show my English language skills to make my parents proud.” (Riani, 4 October 2021)

Excerpt 6:

“I think it's good, it's important. Because they want you to adapt in something different. Or they want you to adapt in the future. So, you won't be troubled by something new or maybe something outside your country, something outside your culture.” (Zafran, 10 October 2021)

The extracts above revealed that all students agreed that the parental involvement they got at home was important for their English learning and it also affected their English learning positively. Parental involvement the students got also appeared to motivate and help them improve their English.

Students' Attitudes Toward Their Parents' Involvement

For the data that covered the students' attitudes toward their parents' involvement, two sub-themes emerged: positive attitudes toward parental involvement and negative attitude toward parental involvement. The excerpts of the students' responses are presented below.

Excerpt 7:

“In my opinion, the results obtained from studying at the English course are enough, miss, I already know some things, but I'm not satisfied. There is still more to learn. Because, like, there are some words that I don't know. It's like, suddenly- oh, it turns out that this word means the same as this but I just found out about it. When, for example, there is a movie, miss. Sometimes the words are different but the meaning is the same. So yes, I understand English enough, but I'm still not satisfied, I want to learn more, miss. For understanding English, it's already enough for me, but I'm still not satisfied because, my English can still be improved, miss. The knowledge is quite helpful for me in understanding English but I'm still not satisfied, because there is still more to learn in English.” (Ian, 2 October 2021)

Excerpt 8:

“I'm quite satisfied, because it's pretty easy to do English tasks now. Because when I look at my other friends, sometimes they find it hard to do English tasks. So, among my friends, I can still understand.” (Genta, 2 October 2021)

Excerpt 9:

“I'm satisfied. Because I am facilitated to study at an English course outside. Then, besides that, my grades are also monitored. So, yes, my parents always monitor my grades. They check if my grades drop or if there is a good change after the English courses. I am also supported, for example, sometimes I'm too lazy to go to an English class. And well, I am given some support, miss, so I don't get lazy, or when I have something else to do, they support me so I still attend the classes.” (Dinda, 3 October 2021)

Excerpt 10:

“I'm satisfied and grateful to have a mom and dad who support me emotionally. Because for material, I can earn it myself, but how parents can build the confidence of their children, the motivation of their children to learn English is rare. Because there are many parents who demand that their children get good grades, or that the test score is good, but the parents themselves don't realize that they don't provide support for their children that make them think 'I have to make my parents proud, so they won't be disappointed in me'. Even parents are like, well, I enrolled my children for English courses, I paid a lot of money for them, but how come they never get good grades? It makes the child feel even more down, that's it. So, so far, I'm grateful to have parents who support me emotionally, not only financially.” (Riani, 4 October 2021)

Excerpt 11:

“I am already satisfied. Because I already understand English well.” (Zafran, 10 October 2021)

The extracts above revealed that students’ attitudes toward their parents’ involvement were overall positive. Four of the five participants (Genta, Dinda, Riani, Zafran) stated that they were happy and thankful for what their parents had done for them to support their English learning. As for Ian, he expressed that the involvement his parents have given to him was actually helpful. He also acknowledged the positive impact his parents’ involvement had in his English learning. This could be concluded from his previous statement where he said that had his parents not enrolled him in the English course or given him English books, he might not be able to understand or be good at English. However, he was not entirely satisfied because he still wanted to improve his English. He felt like there were still more things in English that he hadn’t learned yet even with the involvement from his parents (Excerpt 7).

Parental Involvement Students Wished Their Parents Had Done

As stated in the previous theme, most students stated that they felt satisfied and thankful for their parents’ involvement in their English learning. However, there were still some forms of home-based involvement that the parents did not do that most participants wished their parents had done. From the result of the interview, three sub-themes emerged from the data about parental involvement students wished their parents had done: sending to an English camp, learning with parents, and none. The excerpts of the students’ responses are presented below.

Excerpt 12:

“I want to go to Pare. So, my speaking skill is fluent.” (Genta, 2 October 2021)

When asked why he wanted to go to Pare, Genta said:

Excerpt 13:

“Because English is included in the requirements to enter the police academy. So, I want to go there to continue learning English. My aunt took a test to become a policewoman and she got in after going to English camp in Pare.” (Genta, 2 October 2021)

From excerpt 11 and 12, it could be inferred that Genta wanted to go to an English camp in Pare to enhance his speaking skill. He also considered to continue learning English in Pare would help him enter the police academy. This consideration was also made upon knowing that his aunt passed the English test as a requirement to enter the police academy after learning English in an English camp in Pare.

Genta was not the only student who wanted to go to Pare. In an interview, Dinda also stated that she wanted to go to Pare for the following reason:

Excerpt 14:

“I want to go to Pare. If I go to Pare, I might be able to speak English every day, or talk to friends. That means I can practice it directly.” (Dinda, 3 October 2021)

In line with Genta, Dinda wanted to go to Pare to improve her speaking skills. She stated that by going there, she might be able to directly practice her English every day, thus improving her speaking skill. However, she didn't have the same reason with Genta for going to Pare to help her get into the police academy.

While Genta and Dinda wanted their parents to send them to an English camp in Pare, Ian and Riani wanted to learn English with their parents instead. Their utterances are presented below.

Excerpt 15:

“I want my parents to be able to speak English. So, they don't have to make me study at an English course and I can just learn from my parents. So, it's easier. So, I don't have to go here and there to learn English. It's nice, I just need to ask my parents if they can. That way, learning English is easier.” (Ian, 2 October 2021)

Excerpt 16:

“I think I'm not very fluent in speaking English. And there is some vocabulary that I don't know. I wish my parents could teach me English intensively. I think that would be better. Since my parents can't do it, I wish they would provide me with more intensive lessons, until I really understand English and speak it fluently.” (Ian, 2 October 2021)

Based on Excerpt 15 & 16, it could be inferred that Ian acknowledged that he was not very fluent in speaking English and that he also didn't know some English vocabulary. He explained that he wished he could learn English at home with his parents but since his parents couldn't really speak English, he would like to study English with a private tutor instead of in a regular classroom with other students.

Same with Ian, Riani was also another student who wanted to learn English with her parents. The excerpts of her utterances are:

Excerpt 17:

“I want to have English conversations with my parents. At least, it doesn't need to be every day.” (Riani, 4 October 2021)

When asked if she wanted to have English conversations with both of her parents, Riani answered:

Excerpt 18:

“If possible, with both of my parents, so that mom can also learn, too, like studying together. We can share our knowledge together. My dad learned English earlier. So, maybe if I'm missing something, my dad can fix it. That really, really makes me happy.” (Riani, 4 October 2021)

Riani stated that she wanted to have English conversations with both of her parents. She described that it could be a way for her and her parents to share their knowledge to each other. She also stated that her dad could speak English and had studied it previously. She thought by having English conversations with her parents, her dad could fix her English if she made a mistake. She also expressed that she would feel really happy to speak English with her parents and have her father correct her if she made a mistake when speaking English.

From the excerpts above, it could be concluded that Genta, Dinda, Ian, and Riani all wished for other forms of involvement from their parents. In contrary, when I asked about Zafran about the involvement he wished their parents had done in relation to his English learning, he answered:

Excerpt 19:

“Nothing. Because everything is enough.” (Zafran, 10 October 2021)

Though Zafran mentioned that he had a problem when talking English to strangers, when I asked if he thought his parents could do something to help him overcome the problem, he said:

Excerpt 20:

“No, I can figure it out on my own.” (Zafran, 10 October 2021)

In conclusion, the extracts revealed that 2 of the 5 participants (Genta & Dinda) wished their parents would send them to an English camp, namely the one in Pare to help them improve their speaking skill. Genta explained that he wanted to go to an English camp because he wanted to be more fluent (excerpt 12). In addition, he wanted to enter the police academy and English was included as one of the requirements. He stated that going to an English camp in Pare helped his aunt pass the English test needed to be a policewoman. He thought that by going to an English camp in Pare, it would help him meet the requirement, too (excerpt 13). As for Dinda, she simply said that she wanted to go to an English camp in Pare to become more fluent in speaking English. She said that by going to an English camp, it meant she could speak English with other people every day (excerpt 14).

While Genta and Dinda wanted their parents to send them to another town to learn English, Ian and Riani wanted to learn English with their parents at home. Ian acknowledged that his parents couldn't speak English nor help him with his English homework. However, he still wished his parents were able to speak English so he could learn it from his parents and he didn't need to go to an English course anymore. He thought that if his parents could teach him English intensively, learning English would be easier (excerpt 15). On the other hand, Riani stated that speaking English with both of her parents at home would make her very happy (excerpt 18). She also stated previously that her dad could speak English and by having English conversations with him, he could correct her if she made a mistake (excerpt 18).

There was only one participant (Zafran) who said that the parental involvement that he got was enough and he didn't want to see other types of involvement from his parents (excerpt 19). Although he previously stated that he had his own personal goals of wanting to be less shy when speaking English with strangers, he explained that he didn't need his parents' help with it and that he could figure it out on his own.

Discussion

First, in relation to the students' perspectives of their parents' involvement, the findings of this research revealed that the students perceived parental involvement as important because it motivated them to study hard and made them feel that their parents care about their education (excerpt 1-6). This was in line with a study conducted by Martinez (2015) who found that parental involvement had many positive effects on students' learning including academic improvements and increased motivation. Participants also stated that their parents' involvement also helped them with their English learning. Parental involvement made it easier for them to learn English and it helped them improve their English. This finding supported the finding of the previous research done by Kim & Barrett (2019) who found that there was a positive relationship between parental involvement and students' L2 English competence. Furthermore, Hosseinpour, Yazdani, & Yarahmadi (2015) also found that in Iran, where English held its status as a foreign language, parental involvement highly contributed to children's English achievement. In this study, parental involvement was also found to contribute to students' English achievement. Even though these students lived in Indonesia where English was also spoken as a foreign language, I could not generalize this finding to all students in Indonesia since this research only studied five students in one English course. However, readers could take certain aspects of the participants' experiences and see if they are relevant to other contexts and situations.

Second, in relation to the students' attitudes toward their parents' involvement, this study found that the students' attitudes toward their parents' involvement were overall positive. At their age, the participants were aware of the significance of parental involvement and they felt happy and thankful that their parents were involved in their English learning, which helped them improve their English. This was in line with Al-Taneiji (2008) who argued that students of all ages and achievements levels would value parental involvement. Most of the participants also didn't find any problems with the involvement that they received. There was only one participant, Ian, who said that he was not satisfied because he felt like the involvement from his parents didn't help him enough to help him speak more fluently or know more vocabulary (excerpt 7). However, though there were students who did not find any problems with the involvement that their parents did for their English learning, they seemed to have some issues regarding the involvement that their parents had not done.

Last, in relation to the involvement students wished their parents had done, 2 out of 5 students (Genta & Dinda) stated that they wished their parents would send them to an English camp in Pare. The participants were aware of the importance of being able to speak English fluently and they wanted to become more fluent in speaking English. Then, it was also found that 2 of the 5 participants (Ian & Riani) wished they could

learn English with their parents. This was in contrary with the study conducted by Al-Taneiji (2008) who found that some students did not like it when their parents studied with them because they felt that they didn't need their assistance and that they were old enough to work independently. Furthermore, there was one student who felt like the involvement of his parents was enough. It would be better to point out that I found no similar study in accordance to the findings about the home-based involvement that students wished their parents had done was found except for the one conducted by Al-Taneiji (2008). Therefore, for this part of the discussion, I could only compare a small part of it to the related research results found in Al-Taneiji (2008).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion of this study, it was concluded that all participants perceived parental involvement as important and they needed their parents' involvement to help them improve their English. The students' attitudes were also found to be mostly positive with four students (Genta, Dinda, Riani, & Zafran) expressing satisfaction toward their parents' involvement and only one student (Ian) expressing dissatisfaction toward his parents' involvement. Furthermore, most students were at the age where they have their personal goals in their English learning, namely to be more fluent in speaking, to know more vocabulary, to meet the requirement needed to be a policeman, or to be less shy when speaking English with strangers. Most of them stated that there were some kinds of parental involvement that they wished their parents had done to help them achieve those goals, namely sending them to an English camp, as stated by Genta & Dinda, and learning English with them English at home as stated by Ian & Riani. There was only one student (Zafran) who felt like the involvement of his parents was enough and though he also had his own goals in his English learning, he chose to figure it out on his own.

Referring to the findings of this research, parents should realize that their children needed their help and support to succeed in their English learning. Moreover, they also needed to pay more attention to what their children wanted when it came to their English learning, especially when their children were mature enough to understand the importance of English for their education and their future and when they know what they wanted in their English learning. As for future researchers, they could use this study as a reference to conduct future research about students' attitudes on parental involvement with more focus on a particular of parental involvement. Thus, future researchers then might link the types of parental involvement found with the students' attitudes and found the correlation between the two variables.

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