

Parental Attitudes and Involvement in Primary EFL Learning: A View from Beyond the Classroom

Blerta Galica, PhD Candidate

South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia

Abstract

Family involvement in children's lives and development is considered a fundamental requirement. Its role and continuous support are deemed crucial for a child's personality, cognitive and academic development. Nowadays, when English has become the dominant language, its learning and teaching as a foreign language is also of great importance. In primary education, the home environment, parental attitudes and involvement, its engagement and support are very important factors that can substantially influence students' confidence, motivation and success. Therefore, this study aims to examine parental attitudes and support during their children's English language learning as a foreign language, as well as to provide an overview of the significance of parental involvement during the preparation of their children for tests and assessment in English language, in primary education in Kosovo. This qualitative study involved ten parents of children enrolled in public primary schools. The collected data from semi-structured interviews were used to obtain comprehensive responses addressing the research questions. Thematic analysis of the results revealed that participants had a positive attitude toward EFL learning and perceived their role as significant throughout the entire learning process. The majority of parents reported engaging in shared reading with their children, reviewing English language materials and preparing for tests and assessment, as well as in maintaining continuous parent-teacher communication. Overall, this study underscores the fundamental need for consistent parental support, involvement and continual collaboration between parents and schools in primary EFL education.

Keywords: EFL learning; attitude; involvement; parent; student

Introduction

Education as a concept has historically been recognized as a very important element for every society. Parents play a significant role in the education of their children and wish for them to be raised and educated as worthy and useful individuals among family, relatives and society in general. They are characterized as the role model for their children, thus, their involvement in all aspects of their children's lives is of fundamental significance.

Language itself is regarded as the initial step toward the personality development of a child, since it shapes their character and cognitive development. Parents play a pivotal role in the early years of a child's language acquisition, through daily reading activities for the purpose of vocabulary expansion and language structure recognition (Cole, 2008). Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez (2008) maintain that parents' style when talking with their child is of utmost importance in early child development, as it advances and makes a child more productive. They also suggest that in order to improve a child's language, parents should provide materials appropriate to their child's age. While Guerrout et al. (2019) state that children's language development is related to their parents' interactions, Wheeler and Connor (2009) suggest that involving and cooperating with parents "as partners is critical for young children's development and learning" (p. 36). According to Wang et al. (2018), better communication and common understanding among educators and parents when "dealing with language barriers" are critical factors to overcome problems (p. 21).

The cooperation between family and school is essential in education, where the school plays a crucial part in fostering such collaboration, considering the school's educational expertise in parent-school cooperation. In addition, Jay and Rimkunas (2025) emphasize the role of purposeful communication and well-structured collaboration as the key factors in effective parent-teacher partnerships.

Hosseinpour et al.'s (2015) study exploring the influence and attitude of Iranian parents toward EFL learning of their children revealed that parents hold a positive attitude toward English language programs leading to more parental involvement. Likewise, Dewi's (2017) study investigating Indonesian parents' perceptions and involvement in their children's EFL learning, revealed that parental involvement was strongly influenced by their perceptions, and the more positive their attitude toward English learning was, the more actively they participated in supporting their children's EFL learning. Similarly, the findings from the study conducted by Díaz et al. (2020) analyzing Chilean parents' perceptions toward English language learning, revealed that parents have a positive perception of the English language and believe it is useful for their children's future.

As various studies recommend, good parental involvement is characterized through creating healthy and secure home environment, discussions between parents and their children, establishment of reading environment, studying together and a well-maintained parent-teacher communication (Epstein, 1992; Epstein, 2009; Gardner, 1985; Cole, 2008).

This study is based on Epstein's (2009) forms of parental involvement, mainly parenting, communicating with school and learning at home. In addition, a good parental involvement is herein characterized through creating healthy and secure home environment, discussions between parents and their children, establishment

of reading environment, studying together and a well-maintained parent-teacher communication (Epstein, 1992; Epstein, 2009; Gardner, 1985; Cole, 2008). On the other hand, parental attitude is recognized as parents' beliefs and perceptions toward their children's English language learning and development.

Since parental involvement in children's EFL learning is regarded as crucial and required, this study aims to explore on how educationally advantaged Kosovar parents view, perceive and support their children's EFL learning, as well as to provide a deeper insight into their perspective on parental involvement and outcome of children's EFL learning in primary education in Kosovo. Based on the foregoing objectives, this study aims to answer the following three research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of educationally advantaged Kosovar parents toward their children's EFL learning?
2. Is parental involvement in children's EFL learning required?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of parental involvement in children's EFL learning?

Methodology

The present study employed qualitative research and data collection through semi-structured interviews in order to obtain in-depth responses. A total of ten Kosovar Albanian parents of children aged 8-11 years participated in this study. They were six mothers and four fathers, whose ages ranged from 30 to 45, with highly educated backgrounds.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of two parts. The first part contained demographic information of participants: mother/father, age, educational qualification, field of study and/or occupation, and their children's age and current grade level, whereas the second part consisted of seventeen questions regarding parents' attitudes and involvement in their children's EFL learning and preparation for tests and assessment; their role and contribution to children's English language development; as well as parent-teacher interaction.

The interviews were conducted with each participant individually for 40 minutes, at a convenient pre-scheduled time and location. No formal ethical approval pursuant to institutional guidelines was required; informed consent was collected from all parents, with anonymity and confidentiality maintained throughout the interview. The interviews were conducted in the Albanian language and the gathered data were subject to translation into English, and the findings were further analyzed thematically, grounded in Boyatzis (1998).

Results and discussion

The following section presents the results and discussion of the study, based on the qualitative interviews conducted with a small sample of ten parents of primary school children. The analysis begins with a description of participating parents’ demographic characteristics, followed by the parents’ views and practices.

Parent	Mother/ Father	Parent’s Age (Years)	Highest Educational Attainment	Field of Study/ Occupation	Self-Reported English Proficiency Level	Child’s Age (Years)	Child’s Current Grade Level
P1	Mother	40	Bachelor	Economics & English	Proficient	11	5
P2	Mother	36	Bachelor	Dentistry	Intermediate	8	2
P3	Father	41	Bachelor	Computer Science	Advanced	10	4
P4	Mother	30	Master	Finance & Accounting	Upper- intermediate	8	2
P5	Father	42	Bachelor	Computer Science	Intermediate	10	5
P6	Father	40	Bachelor	Economics	Intermediate	10	4
P7	Father	38	Master	Architecture	Advanced	9	3
P8	Mother	36	Bachelor	Pre-Primary Education	Elementary	8	3
P9	Mother	42	Bachelor	Economics	Intermediate	11	5
P10	Mother	45	Bachelor	Computer Science	Advanced	11	5

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Parents and Children

The demographic profile of ten participating parents is presented in Table 1. The sample included six mothers and four fathers, aged 30–45. Most of the parents hold a Bachelor’s degree and two hold a Master’s degree, with professional backgrounds in economics, finance, computer science, architecture, dentistry and education. The majority of parents reported English proficiency levels from elementary to proficient. Their children were aged between 8 and 11 years, in Grades 2 to 5 of primary schools.

RQ 1: What are the attitudes of educationally advantaged Kosovar parents toward their children’s EFL learning?

The first research question examined the overall attitudes of educationally advantaged Kosovar parents toward their children’s EFL learning. The interview questions addressing it included Q1, Q2, Q4, and Q13.

With regard to language use at home, seven parents reported using only Albanian, whereas three of them indicated that they used both Albanian and English within the home environment. While eight parents reported that their children had a suitable home reading environment with books available, supporting the development of reading habits, a parent explained, "We usually read together and we also buy books that arouse his interest" (P1). Only two parents described the home reading environment as moderately resourced with a limited number of books, indicating that reading resources existed but were not plentiful. Regarding their role in their children's EFL learning, seven parents considered their role important, crucial, or decisive in supporting their children's English language learning, and a parent emphasized this by stating, "Parents' role is crucial and decisive in English language learning" (P6). The remaining three parents believed that parental involvement is necessary alongside school support, highlighting the cooperation between home and school. A parent stated, "Parents should pay attention and support school learning" (P3). With regard to English language skills requiring improvement, half of participants believed that all four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) required equal attention. Of the remaining parents, two identified writing as the most challenging skill, another two indicated that speaking needed improvement, and one reported that reading required the most attention.

RQ 2: Is parental involvement in children's EFL learning required?

The second research question focused on parents' perspectives, the necessity of parental involvement, and its forms and frequency. The interview questions addressing this research question were Q5–Q10.

The majority of parents expressed strong agreement with parental involvement, while only two responded *to some extent*. Regarding the timing of involvement, nine of parents responded that involvement should occur continuously, indicating their apparent preference for consistent parental engagement. The remaining parent reported that involvement should occur before or after tests and assessment, as explained by one parent, "Before tests and after evaluation" (P6). Seven parents reported reviewing learning materials before tests, and only three indicated that they do not review materials before tests. Three parents reported that "do not compile any tests" (P1, P3, P7), two that prepare school-like tests, two others use a combined approach, another two use multiple types of tests, and one parent prepares only quizzes. Half of parents reported that the mother is more involved due to availability and occupation, three responded that both parents are involved, two stated, "We participate equally" (P4, P7) and one specified, "We cooperate, depending on how much we can, so that we are ready for any situation" (P3), and the remaining two parents reported that fathers are more involved due to their professional background in education. The majority of parents suggested active cooperation with their children's English teacher; hence,

seven parents reported regular contact, and only three indicated that their cooperation occurred *to some extent*.

RQ 3: What are the perceived outcomes of parental involvement in children's EFL learning?

The third research question examined the perceived outcomes associated with parental involvement. The interview questions addressing this research question were Q11–Q17.

Regarding satisfaction with the EFL feedback, seven of parents reported being fully satisfied, and three of them reported being partially satisfied. In relation to the overall EFL process, five of parents indicated that they were fully satisfied with the process, while the other five reported that they were satisfied *to some extent*. Ten of parents reported that they used praise strategies after a good grade, including “I reward her for good work”, “I always give verbal praise”, “I praise him every time, as it has a positive effect” (P2, P4, P7, P10), “Well done, Champion” (P8), and “I praise him as much as he deserves, because it motivates him” (P1). On the other hand, two parents indicated that they used punishment strategies after a poor grade, such as “I limit his playtime during the weekend” (P5) and “I limit her screen time (phone/TV)” (P6). Specifically, eight of parents responded that they encourage reading habits and shared reading, such as “I create a habit of continuous reading” (P4) and “I encourage reading novels during summer and winter vacations” (P6). The remaining two emphasized employing strategies to enhance language development, such as “I employ a moderate, steady approach to improvement” (P5) and “Learning through research, writing, and listening because it enhances language development” (P8). Finally, with regard to satisfaction with their children's English language learning and assessment, five of parents selected *very satisfied*, while the other five *satisfied*, reflecting positive opinions with few reservations among parents.

Based on the foregoing results, the following key themes addressing the three research questions have been identified:

Home reading environment and parental model

Initially the study aimed to understand the parent-child reading environment created by the parents and the example parents set for their children toward English language enhancement. A significant majority of participating parents reported that they had created a very suitable reading environment within the home. In addition, many participants emphasized that the strategies they use to encourage reading are to set an example through reading in front of their children, and by sharing daily reading routines at their most convenient time.

Parental attitudes and involvement

With regard to the significance of English, undoubtedly and unanimously all participants answered positively, acknowledging the English language as very important for their children's future success. When asked whether they should be involved in their children's EFL learning, eight of the participating parents answered positively, whereas the remaining two believed that the involvement is necessary solely to some extent. This indicates their subtle understanding of parental role, which is further reflected when asked about timing of their involvement, where nine of the participants responded positively, as well as being involved from the beginning of English learning, with one parent suggesting involvement only during preparation and after the test results. Regarding the level and the type of involvement, the majority of participants responded that the parent who is most involved in English language learning is typically the one with an educational or linguistic background, or the one with more time available.

Academic support strategies

Parents reported their engagement by applying various strategies, with seven of them who reviewed school material prior to language tests, whereas two responded that they did not review language material at all. In addition, five parents responded that they compile combined tests, while four of them prepare tests similar to school ones, internet-based tests and quizzes and the remaining parent responded to never prepare tests at all. Following test results, nearly all parents emphasized that they praise their children after successful evaluation, since, as they stated, it would certainly motivate them. Almost all parents specified that they never punish their children for bad grades, emphasizing its negative impact on them. Hence, while the majority of parents reported to rely on praise, as a motivation and encouragement for further learning, two of them reported exercising minor corrective measures, such as reducing their children's screentime, and playtime. These results indicate that the sample parents use educational strategies, and practices to encourage their children's learning through supervision and support by prioritizing their efforts and dedication as more beneficial than applying corrective measures. Nevertheless, due to the small sample, self-reported data, and highly educated parents, these findings are more descriptive than explanatory evidence.

Awareness of differential language skill weaknesses

When asked which English language skill (reading, writing, speaking, listening) requires the most attention, five participating parents identified that all four of the skills require improvement. Writing and speaking skills were each reported by two of the parents and one parent identified reading skills.

Satisfaction with the EFL learning process

With regard to parents' satisfaction with the EFL learning process, half of the parents responded positively, while the other half stated that they were satisfied only to some extent. A similar, yet more positive response was provided regarding parent-teacher cooperation, when seven of the parents reported being satisfied with the information and feedback on their children's EFL learning, and three of them responded with partial satisfaction. Hence, on a satisfaction scale from 1 to 5, half of the participants rated it at 5 whereas the other half rated it at 4, reflecting a positive satisfaction with some reservations.

This study highlights a common understanding among parents for their importance and how their behavior at home, from creating a reading environment to engaging in shared readings, could serve as a strong motivator for their children's reading habits, thereby enhancing student self-motivation, which is crucial for language development (Cheng & Zhou, 2023; Maulisa & Adani, 2025). In addition, parents' willingness to be involved in the learning process of their children supports their positive opinion and perceived importance of English language learning. Furthermore, parents' confidence in their ability and the pressure of time are the starting points of their engagement in learning with their children. Their support to prepare for exams and their strategies to create diverse tests highlights their practical home-based learning approach. Parents, through this research, recognized their role as important since they reflect and influence their children's behavior and growth (Lesia et al., 2022). Although the majority of participants reported being satisfied with the feedback they receive from teachers, there are still some parents who expressed being partially informed, indicating the need for more advanced methods of teacher-parent communication (Mocho et al., 2025).

Interpreted based on Epstein's (2009) framework, these findings suggest that educationally advantaged parents actively involving in activities including establishing of reading environment, engaging in shared readings and assisting children to prepare for tests and evaluations, fall under learning at home category. In addition, their regular and continues parent-teacher interaction reflect communicating type of involvement, whilst encouragement and parent role modelling indicate parenting category.

Overall, the findings from this study in relation to the first research question revealed that parents hold a positive attitude toward their children's EFL learning and perceive their support as important for their children's future academic success, as found in several studies (Merianti, 2019; Munir et al., 2023; Rintaningrum et al., 2022), which indicate that parental support and encouragement are important in fostering students' academic success, indicating a significant correlation between parental encouragement and students' performance in English (Epstein, 2009). Concerning the second research question, the majority of parents believed that they should be involved during the

entire EFL learning process, whereas with respect to the third research question, parents identified that parental support and assistance throughout language learning is in their opinion, very much required and that positively contributes to their children's English language learning (Cheng & Zhou, 2023; Dewi, 2017).

Conclusion

The results from this study reveal that the highly educated Kosovar parents that participated hold a positive and influential attitude toward their children's EFL learning, while perceiving it as important for their children's achievement. Parents in this study displayed a strong desire for involvement and regard it as essential throughout the EFL learning process. Hence, this study highlights that major contributors to effective parental involvement include regular interaction with their children, creating a supportive reading home environment, as well as having time available for them.

In addition, the findings suggest that when parents are involved in preparing their children for tests and evaluation, they will become more familiar with the methods and the way the evaluation is carried out. Parents' review of English language learning material and engagement in preparation for tests, is perceived as helpful for their children to be more prepared and have better results. The findings also suggest that parents' communication with school is crucial for the successful EFL learning of primary school students.

However, it should be emphasized that this study has a number of limitations. First, the study involved a small sample of ten parents, which limits the generalizability to Kosovar parents. Second, the sample comprises mainly highly educated parents with professional backgrounds and English proficiency, which may have resulted to highly positive parental attitudes reported toward EFL learning. Despite valuable insight into perceived parental involvement as beneficial and supportive, the study relies on self-reported interview data of ten parents.

Given the limitations provided, several recommendations can be proposed to further improve students' English language learning. Future studies should employ mixed methods involving a larger number of parents, teachers, and students. Incorporating their perspectives could reveal a more nuanced understanding of parental involvement and its association with students' EFL learning.

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