

The Influence of Family on Children's English Learning

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Abstract:

This paper explores the impacts of family on children's English language learning, focusing on two key factors: parental involvement and home environment. There are two types of parental involvement, direct and indirect: active engagement and constructive criticism/creation of a pleasant learning environment. The study examines the effects of the home environment, including bilingual or multilingual family dynamics, language exposure, and socioeconomic factors, on children's language acquisition. In order to provide light on how families interact with various outside influences like schools, communities, and technology, the study also examines their respective contributions to children's overall English language development. The findings offer guidance for parents and language educators to enhance children's language learning experiences.

Keywords: English learning, Parental involvement, Home environment.

1. Introduction

With the development of globalization and the increasing frequency of international communication, the importance of English as a global lingua franca is becoming more prominent. Early exposure to and instruction in English has a significant impact on children's cognitive development and future competitiveness in addition to helping them acquire language abilities. In this process, family is crucial. Since parents are a child's first teachers, their educational philosophy, the language environment in which they speak, and the distribution of resources all have an impact on how effectively their child learns English. Therefore, research on the factors influencing children's learning of the English language aids teachers and parents alike by providing parents with useful

information to enhance their own teaching strategies and instructors with relevant data to assist develop effective lesson plans. This paper will focus on two key factors: parental involvement and home environment, and then conduct a comparative analysis between family and other external factors in order to draw a more comprehensive conclusion.

2. Parental Involvement

In general, parents are the first teachers in a child's life. Parental involvement is crucial to the early stages of language acquisition and future development of a child's English skills and affects the extent and quality of language exposure [1]. Parental involvement can be divided into direct involvement and indirect involvement.

2.1 Direct involvement

Direct involvement is one of the most effective ways for parents to actively participate in their children's language learning activities and promote their children's language development. The three main components of direct involvement include participating actively in English-language activities, giving constructive criticism, and providing extra assistance like home tutoring. In particular, these approaches and their effects on children's English learning development will be covered in this section.

According to Dewi, activities such as parents reading English books with their children, listening to English stories, and playing educational games that actively engage children in language learning help foster their interest in learning English and create a rich, immersive language environment [2]. One of the most common and effective forms of active engagement is shared reading. When parents read aloud to their children, they expose them to new vocabulary, sentence structures, and correct pronunciations. This practice is particularly beneficial for young children, as it can cultivate their early interest in language and help develop their listening comprehension skills. Research shows that children who are regularly read to at home tend to have richer vocabularies and better language expression skills compared to those who have not been exposed to this practice [3]. Apart from reading, parents may also effectively involve their children in active English learning by using educational games. Word searches, vocabulary bingo, and storytelling are a few examples of games that not only make learning engaging but also encourage low-stress language practice. Children are frequently encouraged to converse in English through these interactive activities, which boosts their confidence while speaking. Storytelling activities, for instance, enable kids narrate in English using their imaginations, which helps them get better at putting ideas into phrases and expressing themselves. According to research, these kinds of learning opportunities can help kids become less anxious while speaking, which is important for their oral development, and also make them more ready to talk [4]. Furthermore, digital tools such as educational apps can provide technical support for children's language learning. In recent years, apps that promote speaking practice, listening comprehension, and vocabulary accumulation have become increasingly popular. When used under parental supervision, these tools can create a collaborative learning experience where parents and children interact and communicate in English. These digital tools provide a multimodal learning approach, catering to visual and auditory learners while dynamically reinforcing key language concepts.

Corrective feedback from parents is another key factor in improving children's language accuracy. Through gentle prompts, repetition or timely corrections, children can realize their mistakes and correct them under parental guidance. Over time, their English accuracy and fluency will consciously or unconsciously be improved through this process [5]. There are various forms of feedback that parents can provide their children, each with a different effect on their language development. These include rephrasing, asking for clarification, and making direct corrections. First of all, one of the most popular feedback strategies is rephrasing. When their children make mistakes, parents gently correct them by restating phrases or sentences in the proper order. A parent might answer, "Yes, he goes to school," in response to a child who says, "He go to school." With this method, kids can hear appropriate language use without being upset or unnecessarily scolded. According to research, children's grammatical accuracy is especially improved by rephrasing because it gives them an example of how to use language correctly in a normal conversational setting [6]. Secondly, clarification request is another form of feedback where parents lead children to reconsider their statements by asking for clarification, such as "Can you say that again?" or "What do you mean by that?" This type of feedback encourages children to self-correct and enhances their ability to monitor their own language use. Clarification inquiries, according to Saxton et al., assist kids in becoming more conscious of the language they use, and with time, both fluency and clarity increase [7]. Lastly, directive rectification is the process of identifying errors and giving the right format. While older kids who are more proficient language learners could benefit from this approach, it should be utilized with caution when working with younger students because too much correction could make them stop speaking. To keep kids motivated and confident when speaking English, every kind of reprimand should be accompanied with positive reinforcement, such as complimenting them for trying to talk or for using long phrases. Fostering the development of children's English-speaking abilities requires a supportive environment that strikes a balance between encouragement and constructive criticism.

In addition, some parents who are proficient in English may teach their children at home by themselves. Most parents are well aware of their children's language habits and ways of thinking and can tailor personalized learning plans according to their children's specific needs and goals, which is difficult to achieve in traditional classrooms. Also, children spend most of their time with their parents, and this one-to-one, long-term teaching mode allows children to get enough attention and feedback in time, thus increasing learning efficiency [8]. Parents can

encourage their children to use English on a regular basis by setting up English language learning activities or making their home multilingual. According to studies, kids who practice speaking aloud more at home outperform those who just get language training at school when it comes to verbal ability [9]. The informal and laid-back learning setting that home tutoring frequently offers might help kids feel less nervous and more confident. Children may feel more at ease asking questions or expressing confusion in a one-on-one scenario since they are aware that their peers won't be passing judgment on them. Their comprehension of language ideas is strengthened by this open communication, which also motivates kids to take an active role in their education. Additionally, home tutoring often includes more practical, real-life language use, as parents can focus on conversation skills and language that relate to their children's personal experiences and interests. This makes the language learning process more relevant and intriguing, leading to better application of the language in everyday life.

2.2 Indirect involvement

Apart from the aforementioned direct tactics, parents' indirect engagement can also greatly influence their kids' drive and excitement for acquiring English language skills. The three main ways of parental indirect engagement that will be covered in this section are supplementary classes, a supportive home environment, and parental attitudes toward English learning. The first key factor is parental attitudes toward English learning. According to Ajzen et al., a person's beliefs and attitudes greatly influence his behaviors and outcomes [10]. Therefore, parents' own views on English education can affect their children's willingness to learn and use English academically and socially. Research shows that if the parents hold a positive attitude toward English education, their children are more likely to embrace and actively engage in English learning, and more confident to use English in daily life [11]. For instance, as kids add more words to their vocabulary, parents' encouragement and support can boost their self-esteem and drive, which will help their language abilities develop positively. On the other hand, parents with prejudices against English education or culture may have a detrimental ideological impact on their kids' language development.. Moreover, Hosseinpour et al. mention that parents with higher education levels may pay more attention to providing rich resources to facilitate their children's English learning [12]. For instance, they might take their children to extracurricular language activities or create opportunities for them to use English in real-life situations, which can help improve their speaking skills.

A supportive family environment is another important factor in language acquisition. This relaxed and open atmosphere can help children feel more comfortable and confident to use English and developing better language skills. In addition to pushing their kids to use English as often as possible, supportive parents can offer emotional support, which eases their kids' fears about using the language. In addition, they can provide children with abundant resources, including buying bilingual books or downloading educational apps, which let them interact with English outside of the traditional classroom setting. Numerous studies suggest that kids with more parental participation have greater language skills than kids with less parental involvement [13]. According to a previous study by Mushi, in immigrant families, parents play a crucial role in maintaining children's native language while promoting English as a second language, acting as a bridge between children's school and home, as well as between two different languages and cultures [14]. Since they might not use English at home very regularly, children in multilingual families should pay special attention to this method. A family setting this supportive can help close the gap between home and school. A laid-back and pleasurable learning environment can be created, for instance, by parents and kids reading or debating English articles together to pique curiosity and promote enthusiasm in the language. Thus, parental support can significantly influence children's bilingual abilities even in non-English speaking homes.

Apart from positive attitudes and a conducive environment, private tutoring English class, such as private tutoring or enrollment in language classes, can serve as a supplement to school instruction. These extra courses can provide personalized and structured guidance and feedback. For instance, hiring a qualified tutor or enrolling children in online speaking courses that focus on practices like pronunciation, vocabulary use and discourse techniques. This can help them achieve continuous and planned English practice. Research indicates that children participating in additional English lessons have higher overall English proficiency compared to their peers, especially the improvement in speaking skills observed in classes taught entirely in English by foreign teachers [15]. Furthermore, small-group coaching can help kids feel less anxious and worried about making grammatical errors, which is something that big schools frequently can't accomplish. On the other hand, parents must strike a balance between extracurricular activities and official education. Overscheduling extra tutoring sessions can result in a decline in students' enthusiasm and productivity when learning the language, as well as hostility, which is bad for kids' long-term language development.

3. Home Environment

The family environment plays a crucial role in children's English learning. As a place where children first encounter language, their home not only provides initial resources for language learning but also profoundly influences the language acquisition process through factors such as language exposure, socio-economic status and family language patterns. Children raised in bilingual or multilingual households are exposed to various languages from an early age, which fosters language acquisition. By providing encouraging guidance, parents of monolingual children can also greatly accelerate their children's acquisition of English. Thus, investigating how the family environment affects kids' English learning not only advances our knowledge of the language learning process but also offers parents insightful advice on raising their kids..

3.1 Language Exposure

One of the most significant aspects of the home environment is the frequency and quality of children's exposure to language. Research shows that children who are immersed in a rich linguistic environment from a young age tend to develop better language skills [16]. For example, frequent reading of elementary English books and engaging in daily English conversations provide children with initial cognition of various vocabulary and sentence structures, laying a solid foundation for future language development. Baker and Greenfield emphasize that the number of words children hear at early stage is significantly and closely related to their language development levels [17]. Before the age of three, children spend the majority of their time at home with their parents, therefore it stands to reason that children from linguistically diverse households typically have stronger language skills. Additionally, the caliber of the exchange is crucial. To aid in the formation of appropriate language memory in their children, parents should make an effort to communicate with them in English. In order to foster their children's acquisition of vocabulary, comprehension, and audiolingual abilities in English, parents can also incorporate educational technology from the internet and offer multimedia resources at home, such as age-appropriate English books..

3.2 Socio-Economic Factors

Firstly, the socioeconomic status of a family largely determines the educational resources a child has access to. Better off families are able to offer their children more resources and learning chances, like software and books for language acquisition, language training programs, foreign school enrollment, and study abroad opportunities. Children can engage with English speakers more regularly

thanks to these possibilities, which foster an immersive language learning environment. The English learning outcomes of kids are significantly improved by these resources. Conversely, less wealthy families are able to give their kids fewer resources for their education. Research by Jiang et al. found that children from families with lower socioeconomic status have limited access to authentic English environments, which negatively impacts the development of their speaking and listening skills [18].

Additionally, families with higher socioeconomic status are often able to invest more time and energy into their children's English learning because they recognize the importance of educational activities. This is not only reflected in paying for more classes and learning activities but also in the fact that parents have more time to participate in their children's learning process, providing effective supervision and support. However, parents from financially struggling families may be unable to provide sufficient material and emotional support for their children's learning due to work pressure or time constraints.

Finally, a family's socioeconomic status can to some extent influence a child's learning mindset. According to Duncan et al., children from wealthier or higher-status families tend to show more confidence in learning English, believing that they have the ability and parental resources to succeed [19]. On the other hand, because of the absence of parental support, kids from low-income homes could grow up feeling inferior, which has an impact on how well they learn. In summary, a family's socioeconomic status can be used as a benchmark to assess the level of financial and emotional support parents give their kids, which is important for their English language development. Schools and the government can collaborate to create specialized teaching methods that will improve English language proficiency in students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.

3.3 Bilingual or Multilingual Homes

The impact of bilingual or multilingual families on children's English learning is a multidimensional issue, involving aspects such as language acquisition, cognitive development, cultural identity, and educational strategies. Children from bilingual or multilingual families often have advantages in language acquisition, as they are exposed to and differentiate between multiple language systems from a young age, giving them a stronger language awareness. Although some studies suggest that growing up in a bilingual environment may slow down the acquisition of one or both languages, from a long-term language development perspective, this heightened language sensitivity can help them better understand grammar structures,

vocabulary variations, and phonetic features when learning English, and make it easier to acquire a new language [20][21].

Moreover, research shows that bilingual children are more effective at transferring the rules and skills of a language they have already mastered to learning a new one. According to Yamamoto, two different groups of cross-native/community language (CNCL) families are observed in the study: Japanese-non-English CNCL families and Japanese-English CNCL families [22]. Children from Japanese-English CNCL families have a higher proficiency in English compared to those from Japanese-non-English CNCL families. Additionally, children from multilingual or bilingual homes frequently switch between languages, which can improve their cognitive flexibility and general metalinguistic awareness. This indicates that their performance in problem-solving, abstract thought, and task-switching is often higher. [21]. Such cognitive advantages may help children use English more effectively in various linguistic contexts. Despite the many benefits of bilingual or multilingual home environments, language confusion can sometimes occur, especially in the early stages of language learning [23]. Children might mix vocabulary or grammatical rules between two languages, resulting in language “blending” [24]. This requires guidance from both families and educators to help children establish clear boundaries between languages.

Additionally, bilingual or multilingual families often transmit different cultures simultaneously, which can provide children with a richer cultural perspective when learning English [25]. Children may, however, also experience issues with cultural identity when learning a language, especially if they are exposed to other cultures and languages. A child’s motivation to learn other languages may be impacted if their family places an excessive emphasis on one language. As a result, parents are essential in maintaining a balance in language use since they help their children appreciate the cultural relevance of their mother tongue while simultaneously helping them become more fluent in English. Overall, a bilingual or multilingual family environment offers many advantages for children’s English learning, but it also presents some challenges. Therefore, parents and educators should adopt appropriate educational strategies to help children overcome these challenges and achieve more comprehensive language proficiency.

4. Comparative Analysis: Family vs. Other Factors

The development of children’s English proficiency is a

complex process. While the influence of the family is crucial, other factors such as school, community, and social media also have a profound impact on children’s language learning. This section will compare the family with other potential influencing factors and consider how these factors can interact to jointly promote children’s English learning.

4.1 Influence of Schools and Teachers

Schools also play an indispensable role in shaping children’s language abilities. First, they provide systematic and structured guidance for children’s language learning, helping students build a solid foundation in the four dimensions of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Activities such as group discussion, interactive teaching and role-playing are examples of teaching methods that most parents are unable to implement at home. Skilled English teachers are able to monitor and successfully guide their students’ learning development by implementing appropriate teaching strategies that are customized to meet their needs. In the meantime, educational institutions might provide creative teaching resources and useful chances, such as English speech and spelling bees, to motivate students to study the language and advance their proficiency in real-world situations. Additionally, a variety of teaching strategies, such as incorporating games and multimedia into the classroom, can pique students’ interest in learning English by making the process more engaging. Additionally, school exams and quizzes can help students understand their learning level, address knowledge gaps, which can be seen as a process to enhance self-improvement.

4.2 Impact of Community and Peer Interactions

In addition to formal education, the influence of community and peer interaction is another key factor in developing children’s English skills. When children live in a community where English is the primary language of communication, natural interactions in daily life can enhance their opportunities for both English input and output [26]. This authentic language environment exposes children to a variety of vocabulary, sentence structures, and expressions, boosting their English proficiency. Furthermore, peer learning plays a motivating role in children’s language development. Children pick up new vocabulary and expressions by mimicking the language used by their peers in social interactions. They can practice and reinforce what they have learned through games and exchanges, and the relaxed atmosphere of this informal learning environment lessens the stress involved with language acquisition. In general, children benefit from a multifaceted learn-

ing experience that is supported by their peer group and supportive community, which helps them improve their English language abilities holistically. Additionally, it can boost confidence, lower anxiety, foster a happy learning environment, and change language learning from a chore in the classroom to a seamless aspect of everyday life..

4.3 Role of Social Media and Technology

The rise of digital media and technology has transformed the way children acquire language skills, offering new avenues for exposure to and practice of English. However, this factor also comes with potential negative effects. Children can easily access a vast amount of English content online, such as videos, music, and games. Multimedia resources, including educational apps, language learning platforms, and English TV programs, provide children with attractive methods to improve their English abilities outside the traditional classroom or home environment. These resources not only help them expand their vocabulary but also enhance their listening and speaking skills in English. Online platforms facilitate children's connections with English speakers worldwide, enabling them to practice spoken language more conveniently in real-life contexts. Research shows that children who frequently use high-quality educational media can improve their vocabulary and pronunciation through repeated exposure and interactive activities [27].

However, the effectiveness of these media resources largely depends on how parents and educators guide children's media consumption. In today's world of information overload, it can be challenging for children to distinguish between high-quality and low-quality learning content, and a large amount of poor-quality content may confuse them or reinforce incorrect language usage. According to Akbarov and Tankosić, language on social media is often more colloquial, accompanied by numerous informal abbreviations and slang [28]. Children may consequently develop poor language habits that impair their writing and formal communication skills by employing improper vocabulary or sentence structures in formal language contexts. Furthermore, kids can easily become distracted by social media and electronic gadgets, particularly if they spend a lot of time watching quick videos, reading social media posts, or playing online games. This could make it harder for them to concentrate on learning English, which would hinder their progress. As a result, even while social media and technology offer useful extra tools for language acquisition, parents and teachers should work together to ensure that kids are accessing the right materials. . This will ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their learning and maximize the benefits.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is no doubt that parents and families play a central role in children's English learning, providing essential support. But it's also critical to acknowledge the equally crucial role of other elements, like technology, community connections, and educational institutions. Every one of these elements has a distinct impact on how children acquire language. Their interactions can provide children's English learning with more thorough support. A more favorable environment for children to acquire languages can be established by parents, educators, and legislators by being aware of and taking advantage of these influences. Future studies can examine the precise interactions between these variables and how to best utilize them in various contexts to enhance children's language development and learning effectiveness.

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