

How Much is Parents' SES worth for young learners to learn English?"

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Abstract

The parents' awareness to equip their children with English continues to increase as the response of globalization demands. English now has been very influential in Asia's language educational policies and practices for the past couple of years including Indonesia. The concern of today's Indonesian parents toward their children seems to be getting better. This paper, therefore, tried to show the finding of study concerning whether the parents' SES has contribution in forming their views on equipping their children with English. The data were collected by employing a survey technique using questionnaires and interviews involving 245 parents as the research respondents. The data of study were analyzed using an analysis instrument of SPSS with Predictive Analysis Software statistics 18. The finding revealed that there was no significant correlation between parents' social and economic status (SES) either in their education, occupation, or income and their views on equipping their children with English because the significance value (Sig value) was 0.192. It indicated that today's parents' concerns on how their children get a good English education were equally good. They held remarkably similar beliefs on the importance of English mastery for the globalization era, regardless of the existence of English at elementary schools or English for Young Learners (EYL). They consistently offered a commitment to support their children with English learning by giving option to take an English course or English program at schools. They believed that learning English would not hamper their children to master Indonesian language and weaken their patriotism values.

Keywords: *Parents' Socio-Economic Status (SES), Young Learner*

INTRODUCTION.

Parents' SES are often regarded as the predictors for the children in gaining a good education. SES is usually a composite of parents' education, occupation and income, although some measures of SES include only two of these three dimension (Mayer, 2002). Regarding to the influence of parents' SES on their children education, a large number of studies have been conducted in various parts of the world. Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013) in their study in Nigeria, for instance, found that parents' personal educational backgrounds and economic backgrounds have a significant effect on their children education. Similarly, an earlier study conducted by Subbhuraam & Ananthasayanam (2010) has shown that parents' level of education and occupational status influenced students' commitment to learning. The finding related to the socio-economic status of the samples of their study confirmed the fact that economic status greatly influenced the students' performance in language skills. Salameh (2012) has also accentuated that learners who belong to wealthier socio-economic and cultural family environment were apparently more prone to gain higher echelons of success in English. However, according to Benjamin (2014), this was not to say that every child growing up in a poor family would never obtain a good education, or that a wealthier student was destined to be successful. This relationship was not deterministic; there were children from disadvantaged backgrounds who performed well, and children from advantaged backgrounds who failed. Parents of low SES actually wanted to help their child get a good school, but they cannot because they simply lacked the knowledge of how to do so.

The parents' awareness to equip their children with English continues to increase as the response of globalization demands. Statistically, about a quarter of the world's population is already fluent or competent in English (Crystal, 2003). He estimates that in the early 2000s there were approximately 1.5 billion - in over 100 countries - speakers of English worldwide consisting of around 329 million L1 speakers (mostly in inner circle countries), 430 million L2 speakers (outer circle countries) and about 750 million speakers of English as a foreign language in the countries of the expanding circle. Responding to this fact, research has revealed that an increasing number of families, especially with middle families in East Asia likes Chinese and Korean, have gone abroad to help their school-aged children and youth gain international education credentials and provided them an opportunity to acquire English as a global language as early as possible (Song, 2011). Parents in this group believed that their children can gain the access to global citizenship just through English. In Taiwan, parental views concerning when their children should start learning English, who should teach their children English, how English should be taught, and what role English should play in their children's lives have inevitably affected their decision on the types of school in which their children were enrolled (Chang, 2008). Looking at the phenomena, therefore, it becomes a considerable input for other countries for boosting parents to equip their children with English as an instrumental to integrate them into the global world.

Based on the foregoing discussions, therefore, this paper tried to show the finding of study concerning whether the parents' SES has contribution in forming their views on equipping their children with English.

METHOD

Research Design

The primary purpose of the study was to describe how much the parents' SES worth for young learners to learn English is. Therefore, this study used a survey research design. The researcher functioned as the key instrument because he analyzed the data during the data

collection simultaneously. He collected data using questionnaires and interview. The questionnaire was used to uncover how parents' SES contribute to their view of English language learning for their children and what they want to do for gaining the expectation. The researcher also interviewed selected parents to ensure what they have answered from the questionnaire were true.

As the purpose this study was to explore the parents' SES and their views on equipping their children with English, this research used purposive sampling based on information available on the socioeconomic status of parents from the students attending particular elementary schools which were situated in Ponorogo, East Java. Based on the informal observation, these schools were potential to meet students' parents who varied according to the socio-economic classification. Since the targeted samples of research were 250 parents, it was enough with three schools because the average number of students of each school was 360 persons. Therefore, all together was about 1180 parents. Parents as the respondents of research were taken randomly with no specific criteria.

The Data

The data were taken from the respondents being surveyed and interviewed. The data sources of this study were in the form of quantitative data and qualitative data. The quantitative data was taken from the questionnaire while the qualitative data was from interview. In collecting the data in this survey, questionnaires were distributed and interview was done to find out the respondents' opinion.

The questionnaire was designed using a close-ended question. This design was used in order to restrict their thoughts by giving them options to choose. However, in the end of questionnaire, there was an open-ended question to give opportunity for the respondents to give opinion and comments. The following list contained the name of each variable in the survey together with its definition adapted from Griva & Chouvarda (2012).

- 1) *Parents' SES* that covered three angles of parents' education, parents' income, parents' occupation, and home facilities.
- 2) *Parents' views on EYL* that consisted of the parents views on the reasons of learning English for children, the function of introducing English to children, the positive impact of EYL, the judgement of EYL implementation, the necessity of equipping their children with English, personal attitude toward the existence of EYL, expected prerequisites for EYL introduction, and parent's experience to the implementation of EYL.
- 3) *Parents' ideas to equip their children* that comprised parents' preference of equipping their children with English, the extent to which parents support their children in studying English, and suggestions about EYL in Indonesia.

The second instrument employed by the researcher in this study was interview. A group of parents selected randomly were interviewed and asked about their opinions on the relationship between their experience and knowledge of English for young learners and their effort to help their children prepare for a better life with English. The list of questions called interview guide was prepared in advanced. To anticipate the mistake in interpretation, he was equipped with field notes to write down respondents' spontaneous ideas or perception.

Analyzing Data

In analyzing data the researcher used descriptive statistics and inferential statistics method. Descriptive statistics was used to categorize the data of parents' views on EYL into three

groups: good, fair, poor. It was also used to classify the parents' socio-economic status into three groups: lower, middle, and high. This information was displayed through the use of graphs and charts. Furthermore it was used as a tool of understanding the results that were gathered in a much simpler and visual way. Meanwhile, to describe the contribution of parents' views to their ways in equipping their children on English, it was analyzed with cross-tabulation.

Inferential statistic, on the other hand, was used to find the correlation between variables and to determine whether the result was positive or negative. Thus, it was designed to assess the correlation between parents SES on parents' views on EYL. The elements of parents' SES included the parents' occupation, education, and financial status. Then, their responses were correlated with their grades and conclusions could be drawn.

Statistical software that was employed to analyze the data collected in this study was done by using the Predictive Analysis Software (PASW) statistics version 18 for Windows. This software was one of the SPSS program packages. There were a number of similar programs for survey data analysis. SPSS was chosen for the purposes of this study as it provided a good combination of being relatively user-friendly as well as being used in real world research environments. To find out the extent of contribution of parents' SES and parents views on equipping their children with English, the researcher analyzes it by using descriptive statistic through cross-tabulation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The correlation between Parents' SES and Their Views on Equipping Their Children with English

To know whether the parents' SES has contribution in forming their views on equipping their children with English, it was indicated by the result of their correlation. In Table 1, it was shown that The significance value (Sig value) was 0.192. Since the Sig (2-tailed) value was greater than 0.05, null hypothesis could not be rejected. It told us that there was no statistically significant correlation between two variables. That also meant, low or high in one variable did not significantly relate to poor or good in the second variable. Because of this, it could be concluded that there was no statistically significant correlation between parents' SES and their views.

Table 1. The correlation between Parents' SES and Their Views on Equipping Their Children with English.

		Parents' SES	Parents' View
Parents' SES	Pearson Correlation	1	,084
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,192
	N	245	245
Parents' View	Pearson Correlation	,084	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,192	
	N	245	245

Parents' preferences in Equipping their Children

From Table 2, it could be seen that most parents of any SES level with 69.4% want their children to learn English through the language courses. As much as 62.4% out of them had a positive view about English. It indicated that English or language course seems to be the first alternative place to encourage their children to to keep up with English proficiency out of the school. In addition, it was also clearly described that the majority of parents (71.8%) preferred to learn more English through a school private program especially those who came from lower class with 54.5%. Most of the parents (59.7%) had good perception on that program. Only 1.7% of parents who showed poor views. It indicated that schools were expected to provide English private program. At least, it could serve the need of learning English for students from the lower SES background. In terms of the inviting teacher, it was clearly depicted that the majority of parents (81.2%) still did not want to call for the English teacher for their children at home. It means that they might still rely on the school program. In the case of choosing the school, most of the parents from any level as much as 84.1% did not want send their children to the favourite school offering English program. It indicated that they view favourite school has not become their preference for their children. Based on the data above, it was clear that almost all parents (98.4%) still did not want to send their children to an International school. Only 4 respondents or 1.6% from lower and upper class whose the idea to do that. Almost the same as the previous responses, the majority of parents with 99.6% still did not want their children study abroad. It seems that parents had not put the idea send their children to go abroad as the priority for mastering English.

Table 2. Parents' Preferences in Equipping their Children

Indicators	Agree
Sending their children to the language course	170 (69,4%)
Joining the school private program	176 (71,8%)
Calling for English teacher at home	46 (18,8%)
Finding out a favourite school with English	39 (15,9%)
Sending their children to an International school	4 (1,6%)
Studying abroad	1(0.4%)

Parents' roles in equipping their children

Table 3 showed that most of the parents (73.1%) wanted to facilitate their children's learning needs. As much as 65.9% out of them pay good attention on this matter. Parents in general have good responsibility to support their children to learn English. 55% of the them did not appreciate the difference of the children's character. They viewed that all children have the same character. Only 44.9% of parents who appreciated the difference of the children's character. It indicated that parents tended to give the equal treatment for their children. It seemed that the majority of parents (86.1%) agreed upon the idea to support their children to keep learning and practicing. Related to the children's difficulties, most of the parents (61.6%) from all SES background were ready to help their children's difficulties. It means that most of the parents would provide their time to scaffold the children in learning.

Table 3. Parents' Roles in Equipping their Children

Indicators	Disagree	Agree
Facilitating their children's learning needs	66 (26,9%)	179 (73,1%)
Appreciating their children's different character	135 (55,1%)	110 (44,9%)
Supporting their children to keep learning and practicing	34 (13,9%)	211 (86,1%)
Helping their children's difficulties	94 (38,4%)	151 (61,6%)

The extent of the parents' views appear in the perspective of English and its implementation at the primary school context

To know the extent of the parents' view on English and its implementation at the primary school context, the responses were summed up as follows.

Parents' Knowledge of English

Parents' Knowledge of English consisted of the parents' views on the reasons of learning English for children and the function of introducing English for children. The data analysis was presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Parents' Knowledge of English

Indicators	Disagree	Agree
Enabling children to communicate well	10 (4,1%)	235 (95,9%)
Having brighter future career	57 (23,3%)	188 (76,7%)
Developing professionalism	33 (13,5%)	212 (86,5%)
Acquiring new knowledge easily	13 (5,3%)	232 (94,7%)
Broadening their horizon	3 (1,2%)	242 (98,8%)
As a means of global communication	19 (7,8%)	226 (92,2%)
As a tool for technological literacy	36 (14,7%)	209 (85,3%)
As a medium language of the world	14 (5,7%)	231 (94,3%)
As a daily language	164 (66,9%)	81 (33,1%)

Regarding the reason why children should learn English, most of the parents (95%) viewed that with English children would be able to communicate well. This Table was clear enough to describe that English was necessary to support the children's brighter future career. It could be seen from the parents' views which reached as much as 76.7% of the respondents. Similarly, it was also clear that most of the parents (86.5%) agreed that with English students were believed to be able to develop their professionalism. The response figured prominently (94.7%) in this Table, which summed up their expectations from mastering English. They apparently believed that with English, their children would be easier to acquire new knowledge. They might realize well that the knowledge sources were mostly written in English. It was also described that the majority of parents (98.8%) agreed with the statement that English would function to broaden the children horizon. It indicated that by mastering English, people would be knowledgeable. In terms of the function of introducing English for

children, it could be said that English was a means of global communication was acceptable for most of the parents with 92.2%. It also indicated that to use English in global community was unavoidable. Most of the parents (85.3%) also agreed that English can function as a tool for technological literacy. It means that by mastering English, children was believed to be able to use technology easily. Finally, it was clear that majority of parents (94.3%) gave positive response in terms of the statement of English as a medium language of the world. It indicated that English was very useful for everybody to interact with other people in the world. However, the idea to use English as a daily language was unaccepted by most of the parents (66.9%). It seemed that they were not ready to practice English for their daily life.

Parents' attitude toward English learning

Parents' attitude toward English Learning the positive impact of EYL comprises the judgment of EYL implementation and the necessity of equipping their children with English. The findings were described in Table 5.

Table 5. Parents' Attitude toward English Learning

Aspect	Indicators	Disagree	Agree
The positive impact of EYL	Having good oral and written language competences	6 (2,4%)	239 (97,6%)
	Equalizing in the world level	51 (20,8%)	194 (79,2%)
	Freely to go and out within other countries	72 (29,4%)	173 (70,6%)
	Enabling to participate in a student exchange program	19 (7,8%)	226 (92,2%)
	Enabling to compete in work place	19 (7,8%)	226 (92,2%)
The judgement of EYL implementation	Unsatisfied with the English learning outcome at primary school	114 (46,5%)	131 (53,5%)
	Unsatisfied with the frequently changes of Indonesia education	35 (14,3%)	210 (85,7%)
	Unsatisfied with the unqualified English teachers	114 (46,5%)	131 (53,5%)
	Unsatisfied with the less challenging of the teaching material	124 (50,6%)	121 (49,4%)

The data presented in Table 5, it was clear that majority of parents (97.6%) agreed that with English, children would have good oral and written language competences. English, according to them was very important to develop children' competence both written and oral. Most of the parents (79.2%) also agreed that by having a good command of English, people could stand equally among the countries in the world. They also considered that English was effective to make relationship with other people throughout the world. They believed that English was able to help people go and out freely within other countries (70.6% of the respondents). It was also clear that majority of parents (92.2%) agreed that with English, children would find it easier to join the students exchange program. They thought that English was very helpful for children to activate them in any programs which need English as one of the prerequisites of their participation. Most of the parents (78.4%) agreed that by having a good command of English, people would be easier to have awareness and sensitivity of the culture variation. English seemed to be effective to make people easy to adapt with a new environment containing a different culture. The majority of parents (92.2%) agreed that with English, people would be easier to compete in work place. English was very helpful for children to prepare them in finding a job in the competitive working area. Parents as much as 53.5% felt dissatisfied with the English learning outcome at primary school. It means that English taught at primary schools so far had reached the parents' expectation. Most of the parents (85.7%) were dissatisfied with the Indonesia education system which often changes at any time. It means that they disliked the model of policy changes happened in the country without any evaluation thoroughly. The parents (53%) felt unsatisfied with the unqualified English teachers. They expected qualified English teachers for their children who could teach professionally. Parents with 50.6% were satisfied with the less challenging of the teaching material. They preferred to have standard material in teaching English for their children. Most of the parents (79.6%) were also unsatisfied with the way of assessing language learning which focused on written forms. They wanted the assessment of language learning conducted orally.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the answer to the major research question about parents' views on equipping their children with English in the context of their SES, then the conclusions can be drawn as follows.

Firstly, regardless of the socio-economic status, parents today apparently have strong awareness and principles, good motivation, highly learning supports for their children to gain their better future by equipping them with English. Their attitudes and concerns might represent their ability to be "good" parents as the impact of their positive views on equipping their children with English. Parents with low SES tend to support their children in terms of educating values, norms and behaviours more than providing facilities in equipping their children with English.

Secondly, if English is no longer formally taught at elementary schools as a local content, parents will determine to keep equipping their children with some alternatives such as joining in an English course finding schools that English is still programmed, or providing self-English tutorial. These own initiatives are consciously made due to their understanding of the globalization demands. The government policy on English instruction at elementary schools apparently does not have a marked impact on the parents' choices and efforts to prepare for their children's future. Parents today seem to be fairly aware of their children future needs.

Thirdly, there is a tendency that parents' SES does not make any difference in terms of their views on equipping their children with English. There is no correlation between parents' SES (high or low) and their views on equipping their children with English. Regardless of their parents' socio-economic status, their view is positive about equipping their children with English at early age.

Suggestions

Since studies have verified that parents' views to equip their children with English are good it was suggested that stakeholders should collaborate with school principals and administrators to develop effective programs that can strengthen society understanding on the usefulness of starting English learning earlier. On the other hand, the parents who want to build their concept in preparing their children for a better life in the global world with English to increase their concern by involving actively in children activities. Another form of their concern can also be appreciated by interacting intensively with their children to know their wants and needs.

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