

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Young children have a critical time to learn. It is dubbed the golden period of cognitive development and learning, making it an ideal time to introduce new knowledge and skills. Those who learn at a young age are commonly called young learners. Young learners were classified as students in primary schools who are between the ages of six and twelve (Chavez et al., 2023). At this stage, children's brains have a high level of adaptability, allowing them to absorb information quickly and easily. In this golden age era, stimulating a child's brain's more than 100 billion cells can help them reach their full potential (Rijkiyani et al., 2022). By providing the right support and resources, childhood can be optimally utilized to develop the various potentials that each child has. Learning during childhood is not only limited to cognitive aspects but also includes emotional and social development. All children are born with linguistic abilities; learning a language, including a foreign language, is highly likely to occur.

In this period, the introduction of foreign languages, especially English, is very crucial to be done. Early exposure to English language learning is certainly beneficial for the children. Learning English at this age stage makes the learning process easier and more effective. Based on the study conducted by Aeni & Limbong (2023), children are probably more open to learning foreign languages than adults. Children's brains are still developing, allowing them to absorb and

imitate sounds, vocabulary, and grammatical structures more quickly and effectively than adults. Early English language learners tend to have better pronunciation and are more adaptable to various cultural nuances, and they have a higher chance than later beginners of developing a native or native-like accent (Pustika, 2021). The introduction of English at an early age is also a fundamental aspect of a child's education, given the strategic role of this language as a global communication tool (Khairiyah et al., 2023). Furthermore, based on Rasikhah, (2022), children can develop their critical thinking abilities in processing information from a global perspective by learning English. They will be able to see phenomena from multiple perspectives by using different languages. It will have an interesting effect on their ability to think and grasp things (Harmanto et al., 2021). More significantly, mastering English also provides more options in the future, both academically and professionally, as it is the primary language of science, technology, and worldwide business. Consequently, giving kids a solid foundation in English from a young age enhances their language abilities and gets them ready for a world that is becoming more interconnected by the day. Children's proficiency in English is influenced by a number of factors, including teacher quality, school environment, and home environment (Pradana et al., 2022).

Parents as figures in the home environment are the most influential parties on children's interest in learning English. Basically, every child has potential since birth. Therefore, children need stimulus in order to develop this potential (Rijkiyani et al., 2022). Parents have an important role to play in encouraging children to learn English when they are at home. Parents should not only provide their children with

learning opportunities, but they should also be directly involved in the implementation of the learning. Numerous recent meta-analyses have found that various forms of parental involvement (such as supervision and guidance) affect academic performance. The active role of parents in the process of introducing English to children, such as reading books in English, communicating in English, or providing educational toys in English, might give the extra stimulation the child requires to absorb the language. Parental involvement in the learning process at home can foster better relationships with their kids, improve the home environment, stimulate self-improvement, and assist in schoolwork (Chavez et al., 2023). Furthermore, the attitude and motivation of parents towards English language learning also have a big influence; kids are more likely to be driven and feel confident in their studies if they sense high levels of support and interest from their parents. Motivation has a direct impact on how frequently techniques for learning are used. It will also involve goal-setting, learning tenacity, and the power of learning (Rahardjo & Pertiwi, 2020). When learning a second language, motivation plays a critical role in determining whether the process is successful or not.

English starting in elementary school has become commonplace in today's education system. After entering the school world, many children have already had English lessons in elementary school. Moreover, the government has officially ruled that English will be required in elementary schools starting in the 2027–2028 academic year. It has become a regulation in Indonesia that is established in Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) Number 12 of 2024 on the Curriculum for Early Childhood

Education, Basic Education, and Secondary Education. This phenomenon is also a strong reason for parents to become concerned with English. The role of parents in complementing formal education is vital by providing additional support at home. This, of course, requires parents to develop strategies for learning English at home. Therefore, the researcher is interested in finding out what parental perceptions and roles contribute to a student's English learning achievement. Thus, the researcher carried out a study named *"Exploring Parental Perceptions and Roles in Contributing to Young Learners' English Learning Achievement"*.

B. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study explained in the previous section, the researcher formulates the study's statement as follows:

1. How do parents perceive the importance of introducing English to young learners at an early age?
2. What are the roles of parents in contributing to young learners' English learning achievement?
3. What are the effects of parental perceptions and roles on young learners' English learning achievement?

C. Purpose of the Study

In relation to the problem statement above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To explore parents' perceptions about the importance of introducing English to young learners at an early age
2. To identify the roles of parents in contributing to young learners' English learning achievements

3. To analyze the effects of parental perceptions and roles on young learners' English learning achievement

D. Benefit of the Study

The researcher is expected to have the benefits that can be obtained. This research can be gained both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Benefit

The benefit of this research is to provide an overview and give useful information about parental perceptions and roles in contributing to young learners' English learning achievements. Hopefully, this research can also be helpful for further research that has some goal.

2. Practically Benefit

In the realm of practice, this research is expected to give important information for the parents, teachers, school, and researcher. The significances are:

a. For Parents

Parents can know and adopt strategies that enhance their children's motivation and performance in learning English. The findings also equip parents with a better awareness of the importance of introducing English at an early age.

b. For Teachers

Teachers can incorporate the study's findings into their professional development, and they can work with parents to create more effective learning strategies.

c. For School

This research can be used as a reference in designing programs that involve parents in their children's English education.

d. For Researcher

The researcher can complete the thesis assignment for the requirements to get a bachelor's degree at the Muhammadiyah University of Ponorogo.

E. Scope and Limitation

From the identifications of the problem above, this study focuses on the scope and limitations related to parents of children aged six to twelve in the Ponorogo region. The selected parents are those who recognize the importance of English for young learners. Restricting the research subjects aims to obtain more specific and relevant data, considering the important role and perceptions of parents in supporting formal education at school. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to provide a clear understanding of parental roles, parental perceptions, and their effects in contributing to young learners' English learning achievement.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity in this study, the terms in the title are defined and explained as follows:

1. *Parental Perceptions*: Perception is a psychological process where sensory receptors integrate what people experience with what they know, based on their knowledge and circumstances. Perception can be described as the act of managing and interpreting patterns of stimuli in our environment (Ainu Hidayah, 2021). So, parental perception can be defined as how parents respond to something based on their experience and knowledge, in this case, introducing English to children at a young age.

2. *Parental Roles*: According to the big dictionary, “role” means “showman” (movie). The term "role" used in this study refers to the primary task or obligation that parents must fulfill toward their children. Parents are the first setting that children relate to, followed by their elder siblings and sometimes close relatives that reside in the same house. Parents should always keep an eye on their children's progress and manage their behavior at home and at school by seeking information, attending informational meetings, and participating in teacher-parent discussion groups. This way, parents can determine the reason behind their children's achievements and respond appropriately to the issues they face (Sarmila, 2023).
3. *Young Learners*: Carmel (2022) had a perspective that the term "young learners" (YLS) or "very young learners" (VYLs) refers to children learning any second or foreign language in school, primarily those under the age of twelve. Meanwhile, young English language learners (YELLS) are those who study the language as a foreign or second language. In the opinion, in the context of this study, young learners refer to children who are within the primary school age range and are in the process of learning English, either as a foreign language or a second language.
4. *English Learning Achievement*: Success in learning is evidenced by changes in student behavior and knowledge. The changes that take place are brought about by students growing knowledge, which influences their attitudes and behavior. Success in learning English refers to a student's achievement or mastery of English language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This

accomplishment is frequently measured in terms of students' English comprehension and communication skills, as evidenced by academic performance, communication fluency, and a strong enthusiasm in English (Pratiwi, 2023).

