



Developing Child interest in learning English: Mothers perspectives

Samia Zaheer Abbasi*

Muhammad Iftikhar Ali†

Adeela Iffat‡

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Abstract: *Learning English as a second language has become a dire need to meet the international educational standards. The objective was to explore the mother's role in developing the child's interest in learning English. A qualitative method was adopted in this study by taking 12 in-depth interviews from the mothers. Convenient sampling technique was used for the collection of data. Relevant analytical techniques for validation of various generated themes from the transcribed data were used. Using Nvivo Software, the perspectives of the respondents were analyzed to explore the mother's role in developing an interest in learning English amongst the children. The theoretical framework of the study was based on theory of teaching and learning, that primarily focuses on the interest of the learner. Mothers have great influence in building their children's interest in learning English. Three major themes including mother's competencies, home learning environment, and motivation were found. The study gives future directions for potential research avenues.*

Key Words: Child Interest, Mother Perspective, English Learning

Introduction

English is official language of Pakistan and widely used in educational institutions, offices and government institutions. Abundance use of English makes it a requirement to get exposure and good job. It is common to teach English in early childhood education i.e. in nurseries, kindergartens or day care centers. Therefore parents, especially mothers show their concern to English learning for their children in the early childhood. Due to importance of English language, some mothers arrange to enroll their children in additional English language programs. Although there is controversy that is it fine to teach English in early childhood years or not (Choi, et al. 2019). Still mothers agree to expose English language to their children in early childhood and left the debate behind (Kang and Lee 2018). Now it is needed to explore the ways to support the learning of foreign language that may increase the interest of the children to learn English language. One of the most important factors of learning is "interest". Teaching-learning theory is based on the interest-centered principle (Yee 2016). Young children only show interest in learning when they find the subject matter interesting because learning is associated with the interest of the children and their active participation in the learning activity (Baker and Wright 2017). We see that leaning English at early childhood does not related to the language fluency, it rather related to the future outcomes. We also observe that in spite of the collective struggle by the society, only few of the children turn to be fluent bilinguals in later years. According to teaching-learning theory, it can be occurred due the lack of interest and motivation of the children in learning English as foreign language (Yee 2016). Hence it is important to create interesting educational environment that can promote children's interest in learning English language. Since parents of young children are responsible to create learning environment, we cannot ignore their role in learning English in early childhood years. Especially the role of the mother to create interesting environment for learning English language is

*PhD scholar, Department of Education, NUML, Islamabad, Pakistan.

†PhD scholar, Department of Management sciences, Quality Assurance Officer Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

‡M.Phil. scholar, Department of Education, NUML, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: azeemi.adeela@gmail.com

significant (Baker and Wright 2017). According to previous researches, it is proved that mother's belief about learning English language in early childhood plays an important role in creating environment for the learning English language. Mother's role is known as strongest variable behind the learning English, mother's motivation needs to be observed closely to provide her child English education. According to different studies children of 6 to 14 years of age are influenced by the practical educational environment rather than self-motivation for English learning. Therefore, this study focuses on to observe mother's role in developing a child's interest in learning English language. Researchers predicted that providing English education will not affect the interest of child rather a practical environment created by the mother to learn English can reconcile the relationship of mother's role and child's interest for learning English language. Results of the study supports the prediction made by the researchers and endorse that the child tends to be more affected by the active role of the mother in learning education. Keeping in mind all these factors, this study will observe two types of English education:

- I. Interaction in English language at home
- II. Extra lessons for learning English

Mothers tend to choose these two types of strategies for teaching English language to their children in addition to the teaching English language provided at nurseries and kindergartens. In short, the objective of present study is to observe mother's role in developing a child's interest in learning English.

Literature Review

Many researches have concluded that mothers' role has tremendous impact on children's interest for learning English language. This impact seemed to occur in three ways. First, mother competency i.e. her education and home environment. Home environment have two aspects i) environment where she has grown up ii) environment she is providing her child. Mothers themselves are role models for their children in learning language. Children are often influenced by what they see their parents do and will emulate the behavior or attributes they deem positive (Ellis, 2008), and this seems to extend to language learning as well. A mother stated: "When we went abroad, I watched my mother communicate with many foreigners in English and I envied her and I thought I wanted to be like my mother." It shows that when children see their mothers interact with people in English, it fostered the desire in them to do the same.

Second, mothers exposed them to English from an early age through movies, music, or English language materials such as toys and games. For example, one of mother claimed to play English music for her young and said, "I like to listen to the music of Queen. I like that my kids grow up listening to these songs."

Mothers provide opportunities for their kids to learn local language at schools or home tutoring. Those lessons were remembered as being fun and the participants not only learned English language, but also about different cultures. As one mother stated, "I experienced foreign culture for the first time when my mother started playing trick or treating, I think I started to like English then, I am imitating same with my kids to teach them English at home."

Book reading, watching videos, conversation in English etc. are the examples of exposure to English at home. All these small activities create learning environment for the children to learn English with the support of their parents. This method is getting acceptance among parents of young children and a study analyzed online text data which showed that the key words "homeschooling", "mother" and "online content" are being used frequently. According to the conclusion of different studies majority of the mothers of young children want to teach their kids English language by themselves at home. This phenomenon exhibits the online and offline variations of English education. Although a large number of mothers are motivated to teach English language to their kids, we find a few researches on English interaction at home. It can be due to the reason that the method of English interaction at home recently grabs the attention of the researchers. However, more attention was paid on the topics of parent's perceptions and their practices of English language learning and effects of reading English books on children's ability. Still previous studies are limited in terms of amount and scope. In this study, English

private lessons are referring to the additional classes of English language taken in formal environment other than kindergartens or nurseries. Two methods of private English education have been reported:

- i. Child visits an institution.
- ii. A teacher visits the child at home.

Private English education is more focused by the researchers than the English interaction at home. A study focused on the early childhood English language learning research trends and found various topics under discussion such as private English education and child's abilities and attitude, analyzing textbooks, conducting interviews of instructors and textbook developers to improve the early childhood English education. Although it is rare that researchers analyze the effect of mother's motivation on the child's interest in learning English with reference to private English lessons. In short, the aim of present study is to analyze the influence of integrative and instrumental motivation of mother for providing English education on the child interest and provision of English education.

Third, motivation of mothers plays an important role in children learning English language. Integrative motivation and instrumental motivation commonly used to study foreign language learning motivation. Integrative motivation is the urge to know and to understand the new languages in order to communicate the diverse groups of people to learn about different societies and cultures. Integrative motivation was used as tool to explain the motivation of learning new languages in multi lingual and multi-cultural societies. Now integrative motivation has been extended to the learners who desire to learn English language as an international language to integrate in global society. Instrumental motivation is desired to acquire foreign language for practical reasons i.e. progress in education, secure a good job, good earning etc. According to previous studies, outcomes of learning foreign language vary due to type of motivation. Since in literature, many writers and researchers studied the learners of English language, but the focus of present research is to examine the effect of motivation of mother to provide the English language learning environment to young children. Main focus will be on the how mother's motivation affects the child's interest in learning English. Many studies support the evidence that integrative motivation has positive effects on outcomes of learning English as a foreign language as compare to instrumental motivation because after achieving goal instrumental motivation vanished but integrative motivation focuses on interpersonal relationship that lasts for longer period of time. Hence, some studies reported the positive outcomes of instrumental motivation. For example, students with instrumental motivation studied a foreign language for a longer period than students without it when they had an opportunity to gain benefits from learning. So the research says that none of these types of motivations is more beneficial in English language learning outcomes. We can say that the effects of both motivations can vary according to the social and personal factors. Thus present study tends to examine the effect of both type of mother's motivation on the interest of learning of English language and find the link between mother's motivation and child's interest in learning English language in two types of English learning environment mothers provided to their children:

- i. Interaction in English at home
- ii. Private English lessons

Clearly, the mothers' actions and attitudes towards their daughters' English language development created a motivational base for their English language studies. Fostering a positive desire at such an early age is important because once positive opinions of a subject are formed, they will dictate learners' future approaches to that subject (Wlodkowski, 1997). In the case of these students, the role their mothers had in actively encouraging their English language learning is clear.

Methodology

The current research identifies one theoretical approach that is found to be helpful for addressing research gaps, guiding methodological approach for mothers' role in developing a child's interest in learning English in general. Following Table connects teaching-learning theory with the current research gaps and summarizes the implications for mothers' role in developing a child's interest in learning English.

Table 1. Research Gap and Implications for Research

Research Gap	Teaching Learning Theory	
	Implication for Research in Mother’s Role in Child’s Interest to Learn English	
Addressing the gap	The Teacher-learning Theory argues that	
- Does home learning environment help to change the behavior?	-Behaviorism: New behavior or changes in behavior are acquired through associations between stimuli and responses.	
-Does motivation help to learn language?	-Cognitivism: Learning occurs through internal processing of information.	
-Do mother’s competencies help young children to learn English language?	-Constructivism: We construct our own knowledge of the world based on individual experiences.	

Research Design

Qualitative Research Design

This is cross-sectional design study. As it is an exploratory study and qualitative interpretivist approach was considered appropriate to achieve the research aim to gain a deeper understanding of mothers’ role in developing a child’s interest in learning English through personal interviews.

Data Sample and Data Collection

Hence the focus of study is on the mother’s role; therefore, authors selected mothers from different professions with different qualification and family back ground. The study sampled twelve mothers who have, at least, one kid aged between 4 to 6 years who is attending kindergarten and nursery school for interviews. The job title of the respondents are project managers and project coordinators; 9 females and 11 males. The sample was selected purposefully to ensure representation from each project. Table 2 provides a summary of the participants’ demographics.

Table 2. Summary of the Participants’ Demographics

Profession	Educational Background	Number of Participants
Teacher	Master-PhD	03
Doctor	M.B.B. S	01
Manager	Master	02
Entrepreneur	Intermediate- Master	01
House wife	Intermediate- Master	03
Engineer	MSC	02
Total	-----	12

Procedure

Contact details and email addresses of the mothers were collected from the kindergarten administration. Invitations to participate in the interviews were forwarded to their email addresses and personal sitting sessions were scheduled via telephonic appointment. Involvement in study was on volunteer basis and privacy was guaranteed. The interviews, which went around 40 to 60 minutes, comprised of questions with open ended nature with more penetrating to elucidate or succeed answers. Contributors’ answers were taped and validated prior finishing the meetings. Twelve semi-structured interviews were done on in person session. Participants were convenient to give interview in person.

Data Coding and Analysis

The taped interviews were converted into the transcribed form. The interviews incorporated in NVivo for storing, managing and analyzing the data. The coding of transcribed text was done by three-stage

procedure; it includes open, axial and selective coding (Neuman, 2003). In the first stage open coding began with a detailed evaluation of the transcription. During this procedure, patterns were identified, the full data was prepared into theoretical groups and evolving themes were then settled till then each interview had been appraised and done coding. Demographic information was also given to each member at this step, memos covering added ideas or opinions regarding the interview.

The following step was axial coding that evaluates the preliminary themes combined and settled with alike themes gathered together. Furthermore, one main class was chosen under that other connected topics converted subthemes. A concluding review i.e. selective coding finished the coding procedure with any discrepancies or overlying themes recognized and distinguished through associating and antagonizing extent of settlement between contributors' answers to confirm the arrangement.

Results

The results of the analysis recognized three major themes and seven subthemes. The main themes were Mother's Competencies, Home Learning Environment and Motivation. These major themes were comprised of further seven subthemes evolved from the respondents' interviews. The subthemes include mothers' education, family background under mother's competencies major theme. Under the major theme home learning environment, five subthemes were discovered including Books, Music, Role Play, Internet Content, and Communication. The third major theme i.e. Motivation covered openness to foreign cultures, Elementary English Classes. Table 3 depicts the major themes and sub-themes; it gives summary of the descriptions and examples of TMS as quotes

Table 3. Major Themes and Sub-Themes.

Main Theme: Mother's Competencies		
Sub Themes	Summary Description	Illustrative Quotes
Mother's Education	The education level of mother i.e. primary, secondary, higher secondary, university or professional education.	"In my opinion degrees doesn't matter when it comes to language. Language learning is personal effort and it required self-motivation and practice." "For me, family's social, financial and educational status has important role in learning of foreign language. If family is not open to change and unable to peruse new trends, they will not allow their children to learn and practice foreign language."
Family Back Ground	Mother's family background refers to her parental financial status, social and racial origin, education level and religious beliefs.	
Main Theme: Home Learning Environment		
Books	Mothers like to read books of different genre in English language.	"Different societies have different culture and literature. We should read literature of different nations to learn new things."
Music	Mothers use English music/poems to improve fluency and understanding.	"I have experienced that music not only help for peaceful mind but it helps kids to adopt new words and its rhythm bring fluency in language."

Role Play	Mothers use this speaking activity to enhance communication in English language.	“I think role play helps to express emotions and communicate with different social groups.”
Internet Content	Mothers take help from online courses, articles and work sheets for English language learning.	“Internet is already full of English language articles and we don't have other options.”
Communication	Mothers encourage kids to talk in English language with confidence.	“I encourage my kids to speak English without hesitation, I don't care if it is wrong or right. If I can understand it, it is right.”
Major Theme: Motivation		
Openness to Foreign Cultures	Mothers allow kids to navigate across different cultural groups and do not feel insecure to absorb elements from other cultures.	“World is now a global village and we can't progress if we don't allow a cultural mashup but not at the cost of our integrity.”
Elementary Classes	Mothers' formal education of English language.	“I don't believe on formal education of any language. We can learn set of instruction in our class rooms but language can learn through practice.”

Discussion

This part of the article discusses three main categories of mother's role in developing a child's interest in learning English language and seven sub themes, during the investigations to answer the research objective of the study is to explore the mother's role in developing a child's interest in learning English language.

Mother's Competencies

Mostly participants described mother's competencies as the educational level of mother and the family background of mother. All participants were agreeing that language learning is personal effort and family background is important than mother's educational level to learn and speak English language.

Home Learning Environment

All participants considered reading books, listening English songs and poems, doing role play, searching internet content to learn English language and conversation with kids in English language help to create learning environment at home for the children and encourage them to learn English language.

Motivation

As per respondents' views, it is important to have openness to foreign cultures and allow children to navigate across different cultural groups. Mothers are ready to welcome the new trends and changes while allowing their children to mingle with other cultural groups. On the other hand, many participants don't consider elementary education of mother as important factor as language learning needs practice at regular basis in informal settings.

Implication of Theory

The teaching learning theory argues that how learners absorb, process and retain knowledge during learning. This theory is based on the interest-centered principle. Young children only show interest in

learning when they find the subject matter interesting because learning is associated with the interest of children and their active participation in the learning activity. Learning English language needs continues practice and determination to achieve perfection and fluency. Mothers' role is considered very important for the motivation of English language learning among young children. Even though this study is small and the results might not be representative of all English language learners of early age, mothers were found to profoundly motivate their young children for English language learning through their efforts. This study finds children tend to learn English language when their mothers provide them learning environment outside the classrooms. The mothers, who were raised in the environment which encourage learning and speaking English language, made sure for their kids that they studied English in enjoyable and memorable ways such as through books, music, role plays, interesting internet content and communication in English language on regular basis. The support of caring mothers made it possible for the young children to get early exposure to English language through navigating different cultural groups, and mothers who could speak English well were significant role models for them. This is important information for educators who can co-operate with mothers to motivate students to learn English language. This could greatly benefit students, especially those who may lack motivation. According to previous researches, it has been proved that mother's belief about the English education in early childhood plays an important role in creating environment for the English education and mother's motivation needs to be observed closely to provide her child English education. The study declares that mothers' competencies, home learning environment she provides to her young kids and her own motivation to learn and speak English language play significant role to develop young children's interest towards learning English language.

Suggestions for Practice

It is suggestive from the results that there was still a positive influence of a mother's competencies, motivation and home learning environment on a child's interest in learning English. Mothers' motivation and young children motivation to learn English language cannot be discretely separated, and hence, should be analyzed together in future studies to consider their relationship. Taking this into account, it is necessary to examine which characteristics of English interaction at home can enhance a child's interest in learning English in future studies. More research in other areas is needed to determine if this is the case. Despite being such a small sample of students, this study draws attention to the role that mothers have on English language learning of younger children. It also provides insight into how mothers as role models have influenced young children to learn English language.

Limitations

Although this study showed that interaction in English at home was helpful for children to increase their interest in learning English language, it is important to note that ignoring developmental demands of young children and excessive provision of English language stimuli at home may cause side effects. Therefore, further research is needed to provide implications for adequate ways of providing English education at home in line with the child's developmental properties.

The researchers gather data from twelve mothers who have different demographics. Hence, it could not be claimed that the findings have given a comprehensive summary of the mothers' role in English language learning of young children of Pakistan.

Conclusions

This study has shown that mothers as role models have had a huge impact on young children for English language learning. Therefore, one could argue that the mothers' role might encourage young children to attain perfection in English language and create interest in English literature in later years. More research in other subject areas is needed to determine if this is the case. Despite being such a small sample of the students, this study draws attention to the role that mothers have on the English language learning of younger children.

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