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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS

Research Article

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Abstract

Parental involvement is a significant factor influencing students' educational development. The present study explores Turkish parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's learning English in terms of their demographic characteristics. The participants of the present research include the parents of the students studying at the 1st to 4th grades of a private primary school in Ankara. This research was designed as a sequential explanatory study in which a 29-item survey was used along with a semi-structured interview. Findings suggest that parents have a positive attitude towards parental involvement and they are generally aware of the academic and psychological aspects of education. Therefore, they have a good relation with the teachers and they get involved in their children's English language education directly and indirectly. Findings also indicated that such demographic characteristics as gender, age, occupation or level of education, generally, make no significant difference on parents' perceptions about parental involvement.

Keywords: parental involvement, parents' perception, English language education, primary school

1. Introduction

Children's developmental process is undoubtedly influenced by social environment such as family, school and community whose partnership in education has recently gained in importance. The parents or other caregivers are the first teachers of children and this role continues even when they start school. In addition, parents need to become collaborative partners with teachers in order to provide an environment that assists their children's performance at school (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Research suggests that parental involvement affects not only the learning outcomes but also students' social, emotional, psychological and interactional improvement (Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, & Maamari, 2016). On the other hand, it should be taken into consideration that parental involvement involves several dimensions other than parents such as children, teachers, school administrators or policy-makers (Epstein & Sanders, 1998). Therefore, parental involvement can be defined as the actions that the parents perform in order to boost their children's school achievement, which requires joining partnerships such as parent-child, parent-teacher and parent-parent (Mcneal Jr, 2014). In Turkey, the parents support the idea that they could create significant difference for their children's education when they get involved in the process; therefore, they reflect the idea that they must engage in the process actively (Tekin, 2011). Similarly, the research conducted by Erdener and Knoepfel (2018) suggests that the parents accept that parental involvement is an important factor influencing children's educational success without giving up the idea

education is school's responsibility. The present study grew out of the first researcher's teaching English to young learners in a private college and her interest in the Turkish parents' perceptions about parental involvement in English language teaching. Therefore, this research aims at finding out the Turkish parents' ideas about involving in their children's English learning process in relation to their demographic characteristics.

2. Literature Review

Parental involvement is one of the most significant predictors of students' achievement. Given the prominence of parental involvement in education, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) proposes a framework in which they take parental involvement as a process and explain variables influencing this process. That is to say, their framework explains not only why and how the parents become involved in their children's education but also the possible outcomes of their involvement. They argue that in order to understand the process of parental involvement and enhance its level, it is important to explain the following aspects of parental involvement: (1) why parents become involved in their children's education, (2) how parents choose specific types of involvement, and (3) why parental involvement has positive influence on students' education outcomes.

Epstein et al. (2002), on the other hand, focus on the strategies that parents can use in order to get involved in their children's learning process. They argue that school, family and community interactions influence students' learning process directly and proposed the theory of overlapping spheres of influence which supports the idea that school, family and community are the institutions making children socialized and educated. Therefore, they suggest that these institutions need to work cooperatively for achieving common goals for the children who should be at the center of the system. Based on this theory, they assert a framework consisting of six involvement types that may be chosen by the schools according to the needs or expectations. The components of home-school partnership in this framework includes parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with family. The schools and parents may choose one or some of these strategies according to their needs and expectations.

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes parental involvement's critical role in students' educational development (see Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014; Panferov, 2010). Teachers and parents have different viewpoints about parental involvement. For the teachers, parental involvement refers to the home activities with which parents help their children's academic achievement such as homework while from the parents' perspective, it means attending the educational decisions as an involvement strategy (Göktürk & Dinçkal, 2018). On the other hand, Epstein et al. (2002) suggest that teachers and parents need to work together in order to go into an efficient partnership and provide an effective learning environment for the children.

Factors thought to be influencing parental involvement have been explored in several studies. (Calzada et al., 2015; Pena, 2000; Tekin, 2011). It was found out that socio-economic status, parents' educational background, teachers' and school administrators' attitudes, cultural influences were the main predictors of parental involvement. Previous studies reported that the parents with low socio-economic status were less engaged in their children's education (Calzada et al., 2015; Tekin, 2011). Recent research also revealed that parents engaged in the children's education if they were invited by the teachers (LaRocque et al., 2011). In addition, Şad and Gürbüztürk (2013) studied the ways that parents participated in their children's education. They explored that parents chose to communicate with the children, to create

effective home environment, to support their personal development and to help homework rather than volunteering at school. More specifically, Cunha et al. (2015) researched parents' beliefs about homework involvement and their results showed that parents had positive attitudes towards homework and they focused on improving students' sense of autonomy and responsibility along with motivating them emotionally through homework involvement.

Teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards parental involvement have an influence on developing and sustaining parents' involvement in education. The teachers' awareness of different activities determines the possibility of partnership that they could carry out with the parents; moreover, the teachers and parents may come together and use similar strategies in order to achieve mutual goals (Moosa, Karabenick & Adams, 2001; Souto-Manning & Kevin, 2006). In other words, the teachers who are aware of the importance of parental involvement and its' meaning use several strategies for improving parents' involvement in education such as calling and e-mailing home, sending newsletters home, setting up websites for their students etc. (Pakter & Chen, 2013). Christianakis (2011) investigated parental involvement from the teachers' point of view through narratives. She revealed that the teachers saw the parents as supportive figures for their course objectives rather than partners working collaboratively. In Turkish context, Hakyemez (2015) examined early childhood educators' beliefs about parental involvement. She found out that the teachers gave importance to parental involvement, especially to home support, yet she reported that parental involvement was ineffective because of the parents' unwillingness to participate.

When it comes to the influence of parental involvement on second language (L2) development, previous research suggests that parental involvement has a considerable effect on children's L2 learning and development (Panferov, 2010; Xuesong, 2006). Parental involvement affects children's L2 achievement motivationally, affectively, socially and cognitively (Fear, Emerson, Fox, & Senders, 2012). On the other hand, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) state that parents' perceptions may affect the efficiency of parental involvement adversely. To illustrate, they may be afraid of involving their children's education because of their lack of knowledge in the field. Nevertheless, Castillo and Gamez (2013) use the analogy "...a parent can teach a kid to ride a bike even if he/she does not know how to ride." to refute the parents' claim about their lack of involvement resulting from their lack of knowledge. In other words, they argue that the parents can contribute to their children's L2 development even if they cannot speak the target language. In a nutshell, parent-school partnership makes the students feel more comfortable socially and emotionally, which influence students' success positively (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). By the same token, parents' activities taken as a part of parental involvement may affect L2 development directly or indirectly (Üstünel, 2009).

Previous research on parental involvement in relation with English language education reflected that parents believed their involvement had a significant influence on children's achievement (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016; Mahmoud, 2018). On the other hand, previous research also revealed that parents' actual involvement was not sufficient although they were aware of its significance (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016). From a more general perspective, Niehaus and Adelson (2014) explored the relationship among school support, parental involvement and social, emotional and academic outcomes for children's English language development. They reported that parental involvement was directly linked to school support and higher level of parental involvement decrease anxiety, which increased students' achievement.

3. Purpose of the Study

The major objective of this study is to find out Turkish parents' perceptions about parental involvement. The study also aims to explore the relationship between parental involvement level and variables such as parents' gender, educational background and level of proficiency in English. For this reason, this research seeks to address following research questions:

- 1) How do parents get involved in their children's English learning process?
- 2) Do parents have different levels of involvement with regard to their gender, age, educational background or level of English?

4. Method

4.1. Setting and Participants

The participants of the present research included the parents of the students studying at the 1st to 4th grades of a private primary school in Ankara. Out of 180 parents, 123 of them (Male: 31; Female: 92, $M = 39$, $SD = 4.80$) voluntarily participated in the research. Their age ranged from 33 to 66 ($M = 1.78$, $SD = .43$). In the second phase of the study, 10 of the participants also volunteered to be interviewed for further investigation.

4.2 Instrumentation

This research was designed as a sequential explanatory study, which has two alternating phases; namely, quantitative methodology was followed by a qualitative one for data triangulation.

The first phase of the study was conducted in the form of a survey, which aims at not only finding out their level of involvement in relation to their demographic features but also identifying the Turkish parents' perceptions of their involvement in children's education. We have adapted Mahmoud's (2018) survey that consists of 29 items for three categories of parental involvement: (i) relation with teachers, (ii) the nature of academic help parents can give to their kids at home, and (iii) logistic indirect help for kids. Additionally, the instrument includes a section on parents' demographic information which helped the researchers investigate the relation between parents' demographic characteristics and their school involvement. The original scale is 29 item likert scale with 4 ratings (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=always); however, we have added an extra item and rated items on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always). We have used forward and backward translation to create Turkish-language forms of the measures. Two proficient translators translated the survey into Turkish as the first step. Secondly, a reconciled version on the basis of the two forward translations was produced with a report explaining the decision process. Then, backward translation was done by a proficient translator and compared with the original one. Lastly, the translated version of the questionnaire was piloted with five participants and validated linguistically.

A semi-structured interview constituted the second phase of the study. It consisted of questions related to parents' opinions about their involvement in the children's English language education. These questions were addressed to the parents to get a deeper understanding of their perceptions.

4.3 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaires were sent to the parent with children after they were informed about the research project and the types of the questions they need to answer ensuring them the confidentiality of the personal information. After filling out the questionnaires, the parents sent them back. After analyzing the results of the questionnaires, we passed the second part of the

study and asked parents whether they will participate in an interview for further investigation. In the second part of the study, 10 of the participants were invited to take part in a 10-minute, semi-structured interview voluntarily for further investigation. They were asked five main questions in relation to the questions in the survey. We arranged the time at their convenience and did the interviews at school. Through interviews, we aim at understanding the parents' beliefs about the parental involvement and their perceived effects on English language education of their children.

4.4 Data Analysis Procedures

A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used in the data analysis. Quantitative data analysis was carried out to address the research questions formulated for the present study. The data were analysed using IBM SPSS 23 statistical package. To begin with, the participants' scores were computed to obtain the perfect scores for all three subscales. Next, frequency, percentages and means were employed to obtain and characterize the participants' perceived levels of parental involvement in their children's educational development. The independent-samples T-test was used to find out the role of gender differences in the participants' perceptions of parental involvement in children's educational development. Furthermore, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find out if the participants differ in their perceptions of parental involvement in children's educational development with regard to such demographic factors as age, occupation, and level of education.

When it comes to the qualitative analysis, we first analysed transcripts for emerging themes and areas for further examination through inductive analysis from which the themes and concepts emerged. Inductive coding helped us to not only decrease the level of reliance on the questionnaire but also minimize our researcher bias. Secondly, we began the formal coding process and read all the transcripts line by line for general codes based on the recurrent concepts. Three main themes emerged including parents' perceived contribution to their children's English development, homework involvement and teacher-parent partnership. After the initial themes emerged, the transcripts were read again in order to provide supporting excerpts and they were categorized for detailed investigation.

5. Results

This section presents the results of the current study in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics.

The analysis of percentages of responses to the first subscale items, Table 1, revealed general tendency toward "always", "usually" and "sometimes" in all items except for items 2 "*Teachers phone me when my child misses an assignment or does poorly in exams*" and 6 "*I get a teacher to tutor my kid if he has gaps in certain areas*", emphasizing on the teachers' being indifferent (61%) to their students' sense of responsibility and their poor performance at school on one hand and parents' lack of interest (47%) in their children's school performance and achievement on the other.

Table 1. Percentages of responses for the first subscale

Items	The Relation with Teachers	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
		%	%	%	%	%
1	I keep in touch with teachers	18	38	31	13	0
2	Teachers phone me when my child misses an assignment or does poorly in exams.	9	18	12	26	35
3	I let the teacher know I am watching my child's study habits and attitude towards school	22	41	27	9	1
4	I ask the teacher how I can support my child in areas he/she may need to improve.	20	38	29	10	2
5	I share any information that might help the teacher understand my child	18	40	28	9	5
6	I get a teacher to tutor my kid if he has gaps in certain areas.	15	16	22	24	23
7	I thank the teacher when I appreciate something he has done for my child.	57	33	9	1	0
8	The first man to consult is the teacher if my child is struggling with homework.	58	29	7	4	1
9	I make sure that my teaching strategies go with the teachers' strategies.	26	41	20	11	2

In the rest of the items, as shown in Figure 1, positive relationship with teachers exchange dominance among “always”, “usually” and “sometimes”, with items 7, 8, 3, 4, 9, 5, and 1 presenting the highest frequencies, respectively. Careful analysis of the percentages, Table 2, further revealed that nearly 6 out of ten (57%) of the parents always appreciate the teachers' help and contributions to their children's school performance (item 7) and, in the same vein, 58% of them always prefer to consult with the teachers whenever they find their children struggling with homework assignments at home.

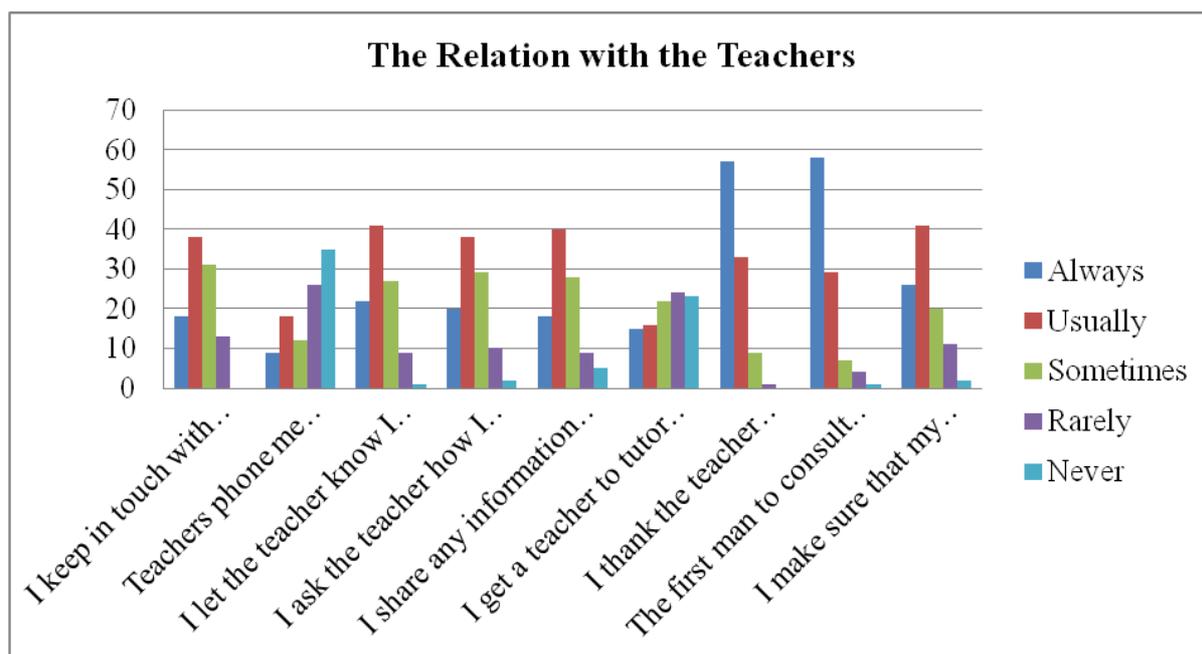


Figure 1. Percentages of responses for the relation with the teachers

As for the responses of the participants' for the second subscale, the analysis of the percentages of responses, Table 2 and Figure 2, showed great tendency toward "always", "usually" in items 1,5,6,7,8 with the highest percentage for item 6 (92%) "*I watch my children for signs of frustration or failure. I let them take a break or talk through difficulties*", indicating that the respondents have a close eye on their children and provide help whenever they notice the signs of frustration or failure. With regard to items 2, 3, and 4, which emphasize on providing instant help for the kids, the results showed a huge shift to either "sometimes" (40% on the average) and/or "Rarely" and "Never" (25% in items 2 and 4 and 53% in item 3).

Table 2. Percentages of responses for the second subscale

Items	The nature of the help parents give to their kids	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
		%	%	%	%	%
1	Whenever he has a difficult word in English I give him the Turkish meaning.	29	50	15	6	0
2	I make him read texts and give him the Turkish translation.	13	25	37	19	6
3	When he can't answer comprehension questions I answer for him.	3	12	32	29	24
4	I give him the instructions in Turkish	11	22	41	19	6
5	I encourage my child to work independently. If my child asks for help, I listen and provide guidance, not answers.	24	50	17	7	2
6	I watch my children for signs of frustration or failure. I let them take a break or talk through difficulties.	46	46	6	2	0
7	I have my children do harder work first, when they are most alert. Easier work will seem to go faster after that.	32	40	19	6	3
8	I check my child's diary to know his assignments every day.	39	32	16	11	2

These findings indicate that the respondents are aware of the importance of students' involvement and their relative independence while performing tasks and doing their homework assignments. This awareness is also vivid in item 5 in which nearly 90% encourage independent work and prefer to give indirect help and guidance rather than direct answers to their kids' questions. Unlike item 1 where more than 90% give the L1 equivalents of difficult words, the respondents avoid giving L1 translations and instructions since it seems that they know these behaviors are considered as inappropriate by the teachers and practitioners and are also inconsistent with educational theories.

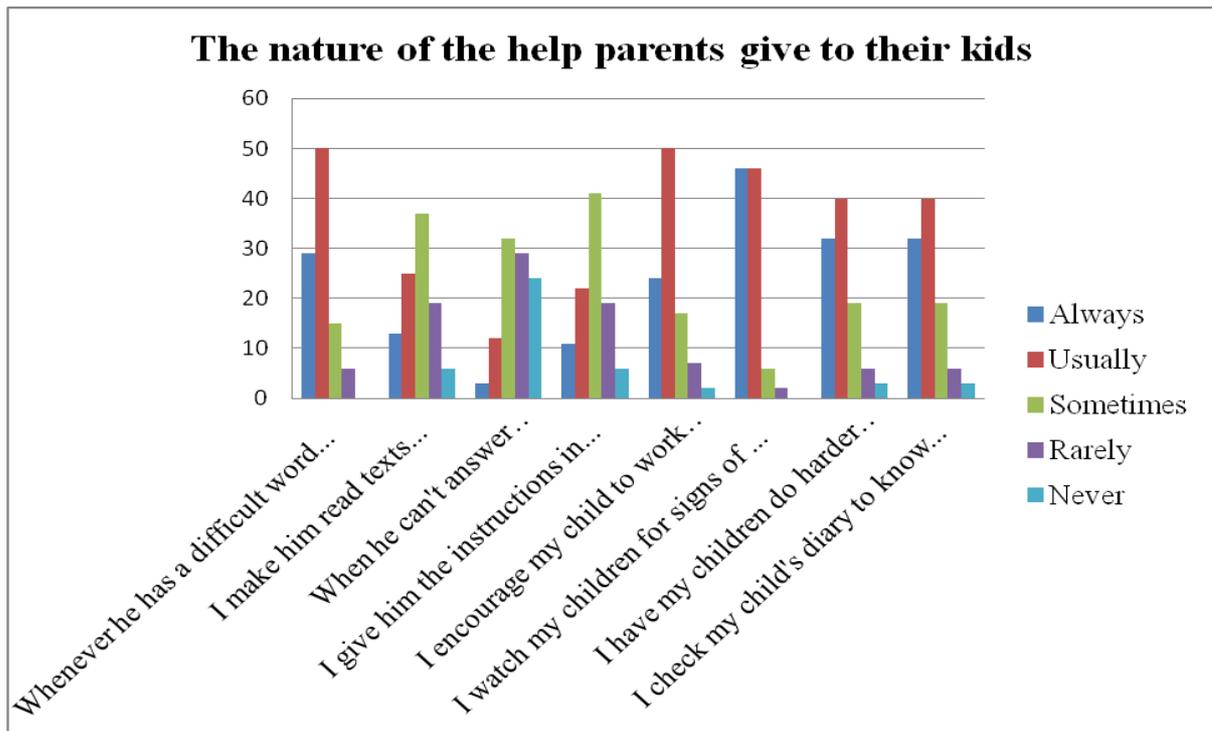


Figure 2. The nature of the help parents give to their kids

Finally, the analysis of percentages of responses for the third subscale, i.e. the logistic and indirect help parents give to their kids, (nearly 90%) had positive attitudes toward providing logistic and indirect help for their kids except for the item 5 “*I make daily study time a “family value,” something each child does with or without homework assignments from school*” where 31% of the parents reported that they don’t make daily study time a ‘family value’ for their children’s activities at home.

Table 3. Percentages of responses for the third subscale

Items	Logistic and indirect help parents give to their kids	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
		%	%	%	%	%
1	I join SMS groups with parents to follow up with assignments and exams.	36	35	15	11	3
2	I attend PTA meetings to give suggestions and discuss ideas related to improving teaching strategies.	48	28	9	7	8
3	I take time to understand my children’s world— their friends, activities, etc.	53	39	6	0	2
4	I go with my children to places where learning is a family activity.	47	38	11	3	1
5	I make daily study time a “family value,” something each child does with or without homework assignments from school.	11	17	41	23	8
6	I make sure the home environment is welcoming and motivating to study.	33	50	14	3	0

7	I establish a family routine with regular mealtimes, bedtimes, homework time, and outdoor play/exercise time.	37	34	24	5	0
8	I show and model courtesy when talking with my children by using please, thank you.	54	39	7	0	0
9	I spend a few minutes daily with each child, talking and listening with patience and love.	63	31	4	2	0
10	I praise my child for real effort and good attitudes about school work.	72	26	2	0	0
11	I pick a time when my children will study each evening; I don't let them wait until just before bedtime.	37	42	12	7	2
12	I try to do some of my own "homework" while my child studies, such as bill paying, reading, and writing.	18	29	32	15	6

The high percentages of positive attitudes toward giving logistic and indirect help, Table 3 and Figure 3, indicates that parents understand and value the importance of providing indirect help in teaching and learning process. More specifically, 100% of the parents try to show and model courtesy while talking to their children and also preferred to praise them for their real effort and positive attitudes toward school work. Finally, nearly 98% tend to understand their children's world, provide a welcoming and motivating home environment for them, and spend time with each child, talking and listening with patience and love.

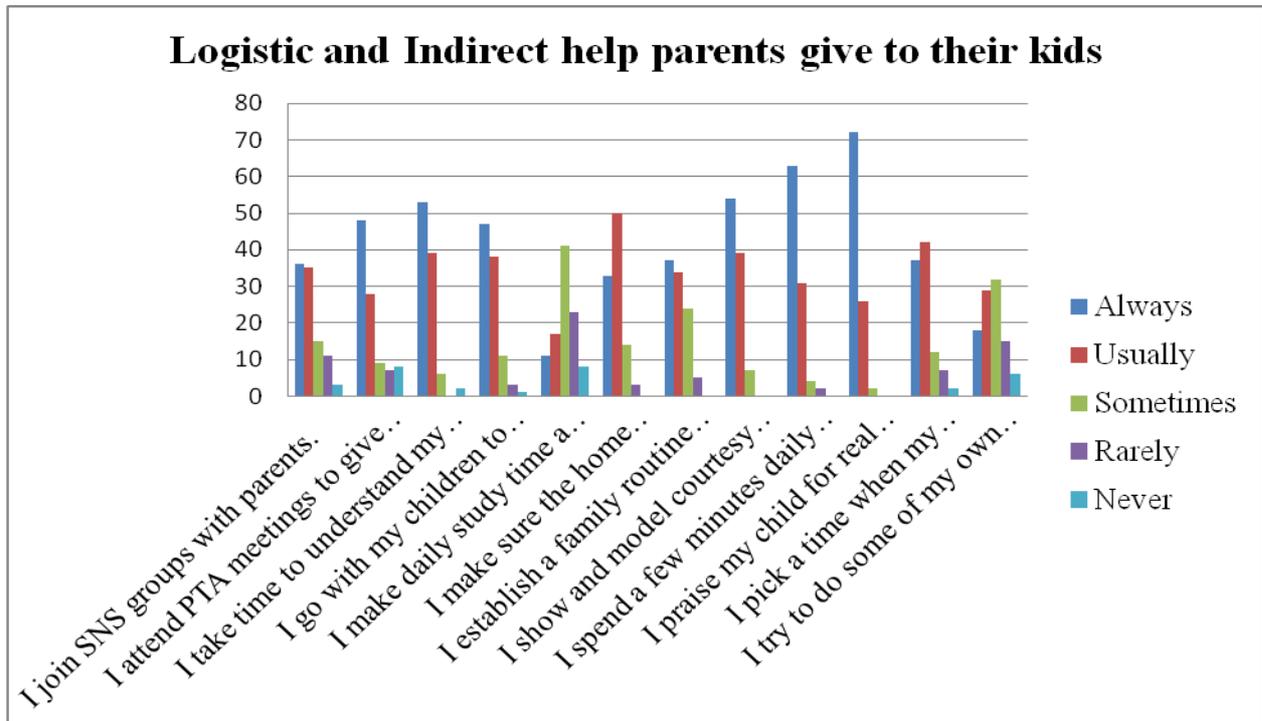


Figure 3. Logistic and indirect help parents give to their kids

An independent samples t-test was run to find out if there is a difference in participants' perceptions of parental involvement in students' educational development with regard to gender factor. The findings revealed no statistically significant difference among the

participants in terms of their perceptions of parental involvement in students' educational development since the p-value was larger than 0.05. However, the results of item by item analysis of the responses revealed significant differences among the participants in items 8 "*The first man to consult is the teacher if my child is struggling with homework*", $t(121) = 2.22, p = .037$, and 9, "*I make sure that my teaching strategies go with the teachers' strategies*", $t(121) = 2.52, p = .005$, of the first subscale, i.e. the relation with teachers, with females having greater mean scores, ($M = 4.50, SD = .79; M = 3.92, SD = .97$) than males ($M = 4.12, SD = .99; M = 3.32, SD = 1.07$) in items 8 and 9, respectively.

Regarding the second subscale, i.e. the nature of the help parents give to their kids, the participants differed in their perceptions only in item 3 "*When he can't answer comprehension questions I answer for him*", $t(121) = 2.12, p = .035$, with males having higher mean score ($M = 2.77, SD = 1.23$) than females ($M = 2.30, SD = 1.30$). Finally, the findings revealed a statistically significant difference among the participants in their perceptions of 'logistic and indirect help parents give to their kids', the third subscale, only in item 12 "*I try to do some of my own 'homework' while my child studies, such as bill paying, reading, and writing*", $t(121) = -2.54, p = .01$, with females having higher mean score ($M = 3.52, SD = 1.10$) than males ($M = 2.93, SD = 1.12$).

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to see if the participants differ in their perceptions of parental involvement in students' educational development with regard to age factor. The findings revealed no statistically significant differences among the participants since in all subscales and items the p-value was greater than .05, $P > .05$. In the same vein, the results of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrated no significant difference in the participants' perceptions of parental involvement in students' educational development in terms of occupation and level of education.

In the content analysis of the interviews, three key themes emerged regarding the parents' perceptions about the level and effect of their involvement in their children's English language education. The main themes are *their contribution to their children's English development, homework involvement* and *parent-teacher partnership*. First, parents' contribution to children's English development describes to what extent parents engage in English language education and the activities they do together with their children in order to assist language development. It also explains the parents' perceptions about their influence on the children's English development. Second, homework involvement describes how they do English homework at home, the strategies the parents use for assisting the process and their perceptions about the effect of homework on the students' English development. Lastly, parent-teacher partnership describes the level and efficiency of parent-teacher partnership. These themes are dealt with in detail in the following section.

Parents' contribution to children's English development:

Parents believe that they have an influence on their children's English development; however, 5 out of 10 argue that their involvement does not create a significant difference on their children's English development. They attribute the children's success to their teacher and state that their role cannot go beyond the revision of the language structures and vocabulary. In the same direction, they state that only the pace of English development could be affected adversely if they do not engage in the process. On the other hand, all of them have mentioned various activities that they do with their children in order to foster their children's English development. They have also mentioned the importance of the language exposure for the development of English. To illustrate, they mention listening to English songs and watching English cartoons with their children. One of them states that they read English books together for contributing to his daughter's reading skills. In addition to these activities, they give

examples about how they study English so as to revise the vocabulary and the structures that the children have learned in the school. They also touch on the games that they play with the flashcards which their teacher has provided. 5 out of 10 parents mention the importance of learning English for their children and how they explain its importance to their children. Moreover, they indicate that they try to enhance children's motivation by mentioning how they will need English in their real life. Three of the parents reflect their desire to talk or learn English with their children. Two of them express that their English is improving thanks to their children and one of them states that she is trying to develop her English skills in order to be beneficial for her daughter. To sum up, the parents believe that they have a fair amount of contribution to their children's English development. On the other hand, they indicate that the children can learn the language without their involvement since they only affect the pace of the development with the revision activities along with the activities making the children expose to the language to some extent. The following two quotations highlight the parents' perceptions about the level they contribute the children's English development:

"We could only contribute her English by supporting her learning process since she does not learn English with us. To illustrate, I try to create an environment in which we talk in English, yet it lasts for maximum 2 days. We could not manage to continue talking in English and turn back to the natural. However, we revise the vocabulary and structures that she has learned at school. (...) Therefore, I think she learns English effectively at school. Even if we do not support, she will learn. She may forget some of the vocabulary but she could remember with a brief revision."

Similarly, another participant has expressed:

"I could say that Doğa will eventually learn English even if we give up studying with flashcards, watching English cartoons or I do not engage in the process. However, I believe that the pace of her learning will be affected adversely in such a situation."

Although parents assert that their involvement does not influence their children's language development significantly, they have mentioned the various activities for reinforcing the children's language development, which is exemplified in the following quotation:

"As I have mentioned, we make her watch English movies which I give importance to have subtitles, in this way she could see the spelling of the vocabulary she hears. It will contribute to her English development since she has a good visual memory, to me. When we are in the car, I switch on TRT World in order to make her expose to English. She prefers to watch cartoons in English and she does not demand to watch Turkish cartoons. Apart from these, we have tried to read English books having a few sentences. I mean easy ones. I have seen that we could manage this, as well."

Homework Involvement:

All of the parents state that they assist their children while doing homework. Four of the parents argue that they try to make their children do the homework on their own; therefore, they only guide them when the child could not understand the instruction as it is exemplified in the following quotation:

"I want her to read and understand the instructions while doing homework such as circle, match etc. so that she could study on her own without our help. There is no sense when I say everything."

The others, on the other hand, express that they participate in the whole process. They not only guide the children but also assist their spelling and pronunciation skills.

“As for video homework, I, firstly, explain the demands of the teacher and we talk about how to do it. Then, we prepare the sentences together and record the video. When it comes to the written homework, we usually help her as she struggles. When I guide her, she can understand easily. In other words, she can continue to do the exercise after we help in a few examples.”

All of the parents reflect their discomfort with the translation; however, they all admit that they give the Turkish meaning of the sentences when the children have difficulty in understanding English. Two of the parents express their pleasure with English homework by indicating that they take the homework as an extension activity and try to exemplify the vocabulary and structures in different ways in order to extend their children’s understanding about the topic and grammatical structures. Another prominent issue parents touch upon is that they hesitate the strategies they use while helping their children since they cannot be sure whether they affect their children’s English development in a positive way or mislead them. The following quotation shows their hesitation clearly:

“Since I do not have enough quality in English and other foreign languages, I may mislead or confuse my child. To illustrate, the teacher may have a strategy to teach particular subjects and I could follow a different path for the same subject, which may cause confusion for him.”

Parent-Teacher Partnership:

Eight of the parents believe that the teacher will interact with them if there is a problem or they can reach the teacher if they need any help. Six of the parents reflect that the teacher’s guidance and feedback are sufficient for them by stating they do not request anything else for involvement or partnership. The quote given below reveals the nature of parent-teacher partnership in parents’ eyes:

“I try to follow the teachers’ guidance. Because of my job, I confess that I could not spare enough time to my daughter in terms of her education. However, the feedbacks that the teachers give when I talk to them assist me supporting the process.”

Two of them indicate that they hesitate to make the children frustrated. Three of the parents reflect their desire for involvement; however, two of them expect guidance from the teacher in order to have mutual strategies for enhancing their children’s English development and the other one ascribes the lack of partnership to his irresponsibility. The quotation given below illustrates the desire of parents’ for setting up more efficient partnership with the teacher:

“Eventually, we would be on the same wavelength and I would not struggle to show empathy towards the teacher. Our partnership will support us and improves the education process. Also, it prevents the conflicts between the parents and the teacher.”

6. Discussion

Parental involvement includes a variety of practices that the parents could implement. One of the most significant practices is to construct partnership with the teachers since it reinforces the students’ achievement and promotes the quality of education (Akkok, 1999; Mafa & Makuba, 2013). The findings of the survey regarding the parents’ relation with the teachers indicate that there is a high level of information exchange between parents and the teachers, which is in consistence with findings of the previous research (Akkok, 1999; Mahmoud, 2018). On the other hand, the parents have responded to the two of the questions negatively in the present study. Based on the findings, it can be suggested that teachers are indifferent to their students’ sense of responsibility and their poor performance at school along with parents show lack of interest in their children’s school performance and achievement. However, the

qualitative findings refute these assumptions as eight of the parents have mentioned that the teacher get in contact with the parents not only when there is a problem and need for help but also in order to guide and give feedback to them. This point of view may lead us to the assumption that parents often expect the teachers' invitation in order to engage educational process as the results of previous research verifies (Anderson & Minke, 2007). When it comes to the second assumption, the parents have highlighted their hesitation of making the students frustrated. In other words, the parents are afraid of making students fed up with studying English. This point of view makes us to infer that parents are aware of the psychological aspects of the education. Therefore, they try to avoid possible negative influences of their over-engagement in the children's education, more specifically English language development. This inference is in line with Al-Mahrooqi et al.'s (2016) study revealing parents' awareness of academic, psychological and social influences of parental involvement. However, parents believe in the positive effect of their involvement on students' different educational outcomes in their study.

In respect to the academic assistance that the parents provide for their children, quantitative results show that the parents are conscious of the importance of students' independent and responsible behaviors while studying since the parents have indicated that they encourage the children work independently. In the same vein, both quantitative and qualitative results show that the parents tend to guide the children while studying rather than giving direct answers of the questions. This result is compatible with the previous studies (Cunha et al., 2015). Secondly, the parents are aware of the adverse effects of giving L1 translations and instructions. Qualitative findings suggest the parents believe that they do not have a fundamental effect on children's English development although they implement various activities together for reinforcing their English development. When we handle both qualitative and quantitative results together, the parents' may underestimate their participation in English language development since the quantitative research findings indicate that they have positive attitude to participation besides the activities they mention throughout the interviews. This argument may be explained with Erdener and Knoepfel's (2018) result revealing that parents are in the opinion that education is school's job even though they accept parents' positive influence on children's achievement. Our qualitative findings verify this argument. Thus parents attribute their children's achievement to the teacher. In the same vein, the parents indicate that they not only prefer to consult the teachers struggling with the homework but also expect teachers' guidance so as to involve more efficiently in the process. Therefore, the possible implication for this finding might be that the teachers should be aware of the parents' expectations and guide them for efficient teacher-parent partnership (Pena, 2000; Xuesong, 2006)

As for the logistic and indirect help parents give to their children, all of them recognized the significance of providing indirect help in teaching and learning process. At the same time, almost all of them highlighted their inclination to understand their children's world, provide a welcoming and motivating home environment for them and spend time with the children, talking and listening to them in patience and love. This finding is in agreement with not only Mahmoud's (2018) result but also Şad and Gürbüztürk's (2013) finding, suggesting that parents often provide a reinforcing environment for their children at home so as to assist their learning.

When it comes to the relationship between parents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions about parental involvement, the results suggest no statistically significant difference in terms of gender factor. On the other hand, detailed investigation regarding the relation with the teacher unearthed that female participants have more tendency to consult the teacher when struggling with the homework and they attach more importance to have similar strategies with the teacher. As for the academic help they give to their children, the male

participants tend to give direct answers of the questions when the children could not answer compared to female parents. Lastly, the findings found out a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of logistic and indirect help they give to their kids. Namely, females have higher mean score than males in terms of doing their homework while the children are studying. With regard to the age factor, the findings revealed no statistically significant difference among participants' perceptions of their involvement in children's education. In the same direction, their perceptions do not vary according to the occupation or level of education. These findings are in line with those of several studies (Hakyemez, 2015; Şad & Gürbüzürk, 2013; Tekin, 2011) while differing from Erdener and Knoepfel's (2018) results claiming that these demographic features influence parental involvement significantly; that is, educated parents get more involved in education.

7. Conclusion

The current study sought to investigate Turkish parents' perceptions about parental involvement in English language education. To begin with, findings suggest that they have a positive attitude towards parental involvement and they are generally aware of the academic and psychological aspects of education. As for the parent-teacher partnership, they believe that there is an efficient relationship with the teacher. Moreover, they see the teacher as an expert; therefore, they not only consult him/her in case of need but also expect guidance. With respect to their involvement, they look down on their contribution to their children's English development even though not only quantitative findings refute this idea but also the various activities they implement according to the qualitative results in order to enhance children's English. When it comes to the academic help they offer, they are conscious of the significance of homework responsibility and autonomous work since most of them only provide guidance while the children doing homework. Regarding the indirect and logistic help they give to their children, the parents attach importance to it as much as the direct help they could offer like helping the children's homework. Finally, demographic characteristics such as gender, age, occupation or level of education, generally, make no significant difference on parents' perceptions about parental involvement although some of them may influence different aspects of their involvement.

This research has only focused on the parents' perceptions about their involvement in language education. Teachers' perspectives could be examined for further investigation. Therefore, the nature of their partnership could be understood for developing more effective strategies in order to enhance teacher-parent partnership. The present study is conducted in a private school. Since previous research suggests the profound influence of socio-economic level on parental involvement (Erdener & Knoepfel, 2018), this research may be replicated in different contexts and state schools including this variable to find out the influence of socio-economic status's on the parental involvement in L2 development. Lastly, parents' perceptions may change over the time as their children grow. Therefore, this research could be implemented again with the parents' of children in different age groups.

The present study has several limitations. Firstly, the results may vary in different contexts since the data of the study was collected in a private school in which the parents' demographic characteristics are somewhat similar. Secondly, it focuses on parents' perceptions without measuring the academic, social or psychological outcomes of parental involvement for children's English development. Consequently, the parents may be mistaken about the effects of their involvement. Also, the teachers may perceive this process in a different way. Thus their perceptions need to be investigated for drawing a clearer picture of the influence of parental involvement.

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