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## Parental Discretionary Influence on Their Children's Manner of Learning English Language

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### ABSTRACT

Parents serve as the first and most influential educators in a child's life, shaping their attitudes towards learning, fostering a supportive home environment conducive to academic success, and instilling crucial values such as perseverance and resilience. Beyond academic achievement, parental involvement contributes to the holistic development of students by promoting positive socio-emotional outcomes. When parents actively participate in their children's education, they provide a sense of security, support, and encouragement that bolsters their self-esteem and confidence. This exploratory study delved into the concept of parental discretion in education and learning the English language. Purposive sampling (n = 16) was carried out to sample the parents based on several demographic profiles i.e., educational background, monthly income, work, number of children, and language/dialects at home. Narratives from one-one-one interview were the primary data in this study. Findings indicated that parental discretion was characterized by (i) understanding child's needs, (ii) adaptation, (iii) flexibility, (iv) autonomy, (v) supportive environment, (vi) reflection. Parents design their support strategies to their child's developmental stage, cognitive ability, and sociocultural milieu, trying to provide an adapted and helpful learning environment. Parents who exercise assessment in selecting learning materials and media content assure alignment with their child's educational goals and interests, which fosters engagement and facilitated effective learning. This study examined parental discretion in many different circumstances, stressing its significance in maximizing

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parent-child educational interactions and providing the framework for future research and practice.

**Keywords:** Parental discretionary; Influence on their children's manner; Learning English language

## 1. Introduction

Parental involvement is a term used to describe the active participation of parents in their children's education (Clinton & Hattie, 2013; Petrogiannis et al., 2017; Shin, 2007). The recognition of the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement has been acknowledged by educators, school administrators, and policymakers. Parental involvement is widely recognized as a vital element of modern educational reforms and initiatives (Wilder, 2014). The direct involvement of external agencies, such as parents, is crucial for the survival of inclusive education (Ralejoe, 2021). The inclusion of family in the learning process has been found to have a positive impact on student performance, leading to a reduction in absenteeism and a restoration of parents' confidence in their children's education (Garcia & Thornton, 2014).

The goal of this study was to explore the parental discretionary influence on their child's manner of learning the English language. Parental involvement is a crucial factor in education and can be effectively facilitated through various home-based activities. These activities might involve actively listening to the child while they engage in reading, helping in completing homework assignments, and participating in school-based activities such as attending parent meetings and educational workshops (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

"Discretion" refers to the level of autonomy an individual has in determining their work methods and the level of effort they invest in their work (Horrell et al., 1990). In a study, Burton (1999) used the term "discretionary influence" to examine how teachers' curriculum objectives and decisions are implemented in the socially controlled employment context. Her findings revealed that discretionary influence is a significant factor for examining the mechanisms and frameworks of decision-making in educational environments and for developing theories about the intricate connections between teachers' curriculum decisions and the working environment. This study adapted similar concept but among the parents who aid the learning their children to learn the English language. By focusing on parents, this research aimed

to uncover the underlying mechanisms and contexts guiding their involvement and decision-making processes in supporting their children's English language learning, thus providing insights into the connection between parental actions and the learning process.

Learning a language starts within the comfort of a home. Parent involvement in English language teaching serves as a brilliant step towards promoting literacy and communication among children (Chavez et al., 2023). The parents have a sensitive say about which language their child should learn from pre-school to fluency levels (Chavez, 2022). Learning a new language can present numerous difficulties (Reyes et al., 2023).

Several studies have shown remarkable connections between parental involvement and student's outcome and performance in school. For instance, Rahman et al. (2017) conducted a study at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Lepar Utara in Malaysia and discovered that parental influence is moderately linked to students' motivation to learn the English language. In a separate study, Sampelan & Sengkey (2022) found out that parental involvement can be a relevant factor in increasing the motivation of students in learning the English language. Some parents believe that learning English allowed the learners to express their thoughts in clear and concise manner (Ceneciro et al., 2023).

Although a large volume of studies was conducted regarding parental involvement in learning the English language, there was an opportunity to expand the understanding about different parental strategies and how these could aid the learning. This was essential because providing a safe atmosphere for children to study, discuss, and ask questions is crucial for their motivation and development (Kartel et al., 2022; Weinfeld et al., 2021). However, studies also pointed out that some parents are not supportive enough to their child (Poyraz, 2017). Some parents choose not to be involved with their child learning to develop autonomy (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015) while some communicate less frequently with the teachers (Harper & Pelletier, 2010; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014).

The challenge was identifying how parental discretion

influence the child learning patterns in the English language. This study initially believed that parental discretion reflects a more proactive component of involvement to student's learning process. For instance, it could reflect their perception about language utility, motivation for life, and its long-term impact (Ceneciro et al., 2023). Parental discretion, in essence, assumes a proactive parental involvement that extends beyond motivating their children alone. By examining these dynamics, the study seeks to reveal how parental discretion shapes educational outcomes beyond mere encouragement, covering broader motivational and strategic dimensions.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Concept of parental discretion

Horrell, Rubery & Burchell (1990) defined discretion as the ability of a person to exert control over their work habits and efforts. A substantial level of discretion allows individuals to choose their work responsibilities, manage activities, and evaluate their performance (Burton, 1999). In administration and law, administrative discretion can be conceptualized as the method by which administrative authorities exercise their powers. This process entails selecting from a range of potential courses of action in each situation, while adhering to the principles of the rule of law, human rights, administrative processes, and the intended goals of the power (Bakhtina et al., 2023).

Previous research in the field of strategy theory has demonstrated that variations in managerial discretion have an impact on variations in corporate performance. Within the context of research focused on the upper echelon theory, which posits that top-level executives exert a substantial influence on the overall performance of organizations, the concept of managerial discretion is considered as a moderator that connects managerial characteristics with organizational outcomes (Ali et al., 2022; Caza, 2011; Hambrick & Abrahamson, 1995; Key, 1997; Wangrow et al., 2015). Managerial discretion is a concept that pertains to the degree to which management possesses the authority to make and exert influence over decisions in different aspects of management. These areas may include the implementation of private-sector management techniques, evaluation of compensation and benefits, and handling of personnel matters (Ali et al., 2022). This study adapted this concept of dis-

cretion in describing the strategic involvement of parents in learning and education.

Before applying discretion in parental involvement, it is essential to establish its scope and conceptual definition. Discretion, in the context of parental involvement, can be conceptually defined as the degree of autonomy and control parents have in guiding and influencing their children's educational processes. This includes the ability to decide on the strategies and methods for supporting their children's learning, manage the educational activities they encourage, and evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts. High levels of parental discretion allow parents to design their involvement to their child's needs, make informed choices about educational priorities, and actively shape the learning environment to enhance their children's academic development and motivation. The main difference between parental discretion and involvement was the capacity of parents to continuously interact with their children without hampering their socio-developmental state e.g., autonomy, freedom, academic attitudes, learning preferences, etc.

### 2.2 Parental support

Parental support can be defined as the act of providing social capital within the context of a parent-child relationship involving informational support, emotional support, and instrumental support (Wohn et al., 2013). The provision of parental support has been found to have a positive impact on academic motivation and tenacity, ultimately resulting in higher levels of academic achievement (Mih & Mih, 2013). It was found that there is a positive correlation between higher levels of family emotional support and academic performance and engagement among a sample of 728 first-year, low-income first-generation college students. It is observed that a higher level of family financial support has been found to act as a protective factor for continuing-generation students (Roksa & Kinsley, 2019).

It is beneficial when parents actively participating in their children's education because this leads to an improvement in the children's academic achievement. Students can concentrate more intently on their academic work (Kwatubana & Makhalemele, 2015). The presence of parental monitoring serves as a source of motivation for learners, discouraging them from easily giving up when faced with difficulties in comprehending a specific subject matter. Ad-

ditionally, the knowledge that their parents are consistently monitoring their attendance further deters learners from skipping classes (Lemmer, 2007).

In a case study conducted by McCulloh (2022), it was observed that some first-generation college students from rural areas benefited from various forms of support, including parental, familial, and community support. These supportive factors played a crucial role in promoting the retention of these students in their academic pursuits. In their study, Capannola and Johnson (2022) discovered that parents play a crucial role in the educational success of first-generation college students. Similarly, Lee and Fletcher (2023) noted that first-generation college students who have supportive parents exhibit elevated levels of academic adjustment and social adjustment as well as these students experience lower emotional detachment from their parents. However, individuals with low parental support tend to experience lower levels of academic adjustment and social adjustment.

### 2.3 Strategic discretion in English language learning

Parental involvement enhances the academic proficiency and skills of children by fostering positive attitudes and facilitating social interactions that advocate for solid academic principles (Puccioni, 2015). Autonomy-supportive strategies can be employed by parents to effectively engage with and support their children. These strategies include being attentive and actively listening to students, expressing empathy and providing autonomy-supportive statements, acknowledging and appreciating their studying efforts, demonstrating resilient learning behaviors as role models, and offering mastery-oriented feedback when students encounter difficulties or setbacks (Gonzalez-DeHass, 2019). This study considered autonomy-supportive strategies as “strategic discretion” because they represent a deliberate and thoughtful application of parental autonomy to influence and enhance their children’s educational experiences. By exercising strategic discretion, parents are able to design their involvement to meet the unique needs of their children, fostering an environment that promotes motivation, resilience, and a mastery-oriented approach to learning.

Unsupportive environments, including those of friends and parents, can lead to demotivation and loss of creativity in learning a language. A lack of involvement in their children’s

learning process, particularly in improving their speaking skills, attending activities, and ensuring homework completion, can hinder their progress (Putri et al., 2022). Some parents were trying to support their child in learning the English language (Chavez et al., 2023); in fact, one parent said that “... *even if I’m not into English grammar and structure, I also correct them. I advocate the grammar, I assist them, and I correct them.*” One parent in their study also said that “*I supported him by letting him watch English cartoons. In that way, my child will learn basic English...watching videos help my child learn the alphabet, and the names of the objects.*”

When parents fail to actively engage in their children’s learning process—such as by not aiding in the improvement of speaking skills, attending educational activities, or ensuring homework completion—it can significantly hinder their progress. However, the active involvement of parents who employ strategic discretion in their support can make a substantial difference. Some parents might demonstrate this by correcting their children’s grammar, assisting with English language structures, and advocating for proper usage, despite their own limitations in the subject. Others support their children by incorporating educational activities, like watching English cartoons, which can help children learn basic vocabulary and language structures in an engaging and enjoyable manner. These examples highlight how parental discretion, exercised thoughtfully and strategically, can create a supportive and motivating learning environment that fosters creativity and language development. By taking an active role and making informed decisions about how to support their children’s education, parents can significantly enhance their children’s language learning experiences and outcomes.

## 3. Research questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how parental discretion could be a factor in children’s English language learning. The study seeks to understand how such involvement influences children’s progress in language acquisition, creativity, and motivation. By examining the role of parental discretion, the study intended to highlight effective strategies that parents can adopt to create a supportive and stimulating learning environment, ultimately enhancing their children’s

educational outcomes. Below are the research questions sought to be answered in this study.

1. What were the perceptions of parents about the importance of learning the English language for their child?
2. How did parents take an active part in child's learning process in the English language at home?
3. What were the instructional strategies of parents in aiding their child to learn the English language?
4. Why was it important for parents to have discretionary influence over the learning materials for their child?

## 4. Research design

This study was an exploratory design (Calaro et al., 2023) that explored the experiences of parents in teaching their children the English language. Exploratory design is a research approach that aims to investigate an area where little is known or to gain new insights into a topic. This design is characterized by its flexibility and openness to new discoveries, often employing qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, and observations (Chavez & Del Prado, 2023; Duhaylungsod & Chavez, 2023; Inoferio et al., 2024).

Narrative data was collected through one-on-one interview with the parents. These data were analyzed to elicit understanding about the concept of parental discretion and discretionary influence on the child's language learning. The goal of this analysis was to gather preliminary information that helps define problems, develop hypotheses, and identify variables that can be tested in future studies. It does not seek to provide conclusive answers but rather to uncover patterns, ideas, and relationships that deepen the understanding of the subject matter.

### 4.1 Sampling and participants

Purposive sampling ( $n = 16$ ) was carried out to sample the participants of this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where researchers deliberately select participants based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the study (Chavez & Ceneciro, 2023; Murro et al., 2023). This method is used when the researcher wants to focus on subsets of a population that are most informative or have the most relevant expertise or experiences to address the research questions. To conduct purposive

sampling, the researcher first defines the criteria for participant selection, which could be based on demographic traits, professional background, experience, or other pertinent factors. In this study, several variables were considered e.g., educational background, monthly income, work, number of children, and language/dialects at home. **Table 1** presents the demographic profile of the parents who participated in this study.

### 4.2 Instrument

This study developed exclusive interview guide questions to elicit the responses from the participants. These questions were designed to be open-ended and non-leading, allowing participants the freedom to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words. Careful consideration was given to the phrasing and sequencing of the questions to facilitate a logical flow of conversation and to ensure that all relevant aspects of the research were addressed. The interview guide was then refined through pilot testing and feedback from experts in the field to enhance clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the study objectives. The interview guide served as a structured yet flexible tool to guide the interviewer and facilitate in-depth exploration of the research topic, thereby contributing to the generation of rich and valuable data for analysis and interpretation. **Table 2** presents the interview guide used in this study.

### 4.3 Data gathering procedure

In adhering to ethical standards and ensuring participant understanding and informed consent, a written consent form was meticulously prepared by the researcher. This document outlined the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study, providing participants with a clear understanding of their involvement and rights. Participants were asked to carefully read and sign the consent form prior to the commencement of the interview, affirming their voluntary participation. Prior to conducting the interview, detailed instructions were provided to the participants to familiarize them with the interview process, expectations, and confidentiality protocols. Additionally, scheduling arrangements for individual interviews were made in consideration of participant convenience and availability, facilitating optimal engagement and participation.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of the parents.

	Educational background	Monthly income	Work	Number of children	Language/dialects at home
Parent 1	Bachelor's Degree	Moderate	Teacher	2	English, Chavacano
Parent 2	High School Diploma	Low	Retail Worker	3	English, Visayan
Parent 3	Master's Degree	High	Engineer	1	English, Filipino
Parent 4	Associate's Degree	Moderate	Administrative Assistant	2	English, Filipino
Parent 5	High School Diploma	Low	Homemaker	4	Filipino
Parent 6	Bachelor's Degree	Moderate	Nurse	2	English, Filipino, Visayan
Parent 7	Master's Degree	High	Lawyer	1	English
Parent 8	Bachelor's Degree	Moderate	Small Business Owner	3	English, Filipino
Parent 9	High School Diploma	Low	Construction Worker	2	Visayan
Parent 10	Associate's Degree	Moderate	Office Manager	2	English, Filipino
Parent 11	Bachelor's Degree	High	IT Specialist	1	English, Chavacano
Parent 12	High School Diploma	Low	Waiter	3	English, Filipino
Parent 13	Master's Degree	High	Marketing Director	2	English, Filipino, Visayan
Parent 14	Associate's Degree	Moderate	Technician	2	English, Filipino
Parent 15	Bachelor's Degree	Moderate	Social Worker	3	Visayan
Parent 16	High School Diploma	Low	Driver	2	Filipino

For income: ≤Php 20,000.00 (low); Php 20,000.00-Php50,000.00 (moderate); ≥Php 50,000.00 (high).

**Table 2.** One-on-one interview guide questions.

Objectives	Interview questions
What were the perceptions of parents about the importance of learning the English language for their child?	How important is learning the English language for your child? Elaborate your answer.
How did parents take an active part in child's learning process in the English language at home?	Do you take active part in the English language learning of your child at home? Describe your active participation.
What were the instructional strategies of parents in aiding their child to learn the English language?	Do you actively filter or screen out instructional materials for the English language learning of your child? Elaborate your manner of filtering.
Why was it important for parents to have discretionary influence over the learning materials for their child?	Is it important that parents have discretionary influence over the English language learning materials for their children? Explain the importance.

Upon completion of the interviews, a systematic approach to data analysis was undertaken through coding of participants' responses. This process involved categorizing and organizing the narrative data into meaningful themes and patterns based on the research questions and emerging topics. Through a rigorous coding process, key insights and trends were identified, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, responses were translated, as necessary, to facilitate analysis and interpretation across linguistic boundaries.

#### 4.4 Data analysis

In this study, the primary dataset consisted of interview narratives provided by the participating parents. Thematic analysis was employed as the methodological approach to interpret and make sense of the qualitative data gathered. Thematic analysis operates under the premise that the recorded information serves as an accurate representation of the participants' realities and can be leveraged to derive meaningful in-

sights into their experiences (Lochmiller, 2021). The process of data analysis involved systematically coding the responses provided by the participants, identifying recurring patterns, and organizing them into coherent themes that addressed the research questions of the study. Drawing from the principles outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012), the analysis aimed to identify and extract relevant statements or segments from the interview transcripts that directly contributed to answering specific research inquiries.

The thematic analysis approach adopted in this study facilitated an exploration of the various dimensions of parental discretion in their children's English language learning. By systematically coding and categorizing the participants' responses, the researcher was able to discern key themes, patterns, and insights that shed light on the diverse strategies, motivations, and challenges associated with parental discretion in educational settings. Additionally, the iterative nature of thematic analysis allowed for a thorough examination of the data, ensuring that no significant insights or perspectives were overlooked. This rigorous analytical pro-

cess not only provided a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon but also generated valuable insights that contributed to the broader scholarly discourse on parental involvement and its impact on children's language acquisition and development.

## 5. Results

*Question 1.* What were the perceptions of parents about the importance of learning the English language for their child?

### Theme 1: Global Opportunities

Most parents (n = 12) noted the global significance of English proficiency, viewing it as a gateway to a countless of opportunities. They emphasize its pivotal role in education, business, and technology, indicating that proficiency in English equips children with essential tools for navigating the increasingly interconnected world.

“Learning English is important for my kid. It's like handing them a passport to the world. English opens up opportunities, helps them communicate effectively, and gives them access to a ton of resources they wouldn't otherwise have.” [Participant 6]

“Learning English is important for our children. In this day and age, it opens up so many doors, you know? It's not just about getting good grades; it's about giving them the tools to navigate the world.” [Parent 1]

“Learning English is important for my kid. In today's world, it's like having a key to unlock a lot of doors. It opens up opportunities, helps in communication, and broadens horizons. Plus, it's the language of a lot of important stuff, like technology, science, and business.” [Parent 12]

### Theme 2: Practical Necessity

Some parents (n = 10) perceive learning English as a pragmatic necessity in today's digital era. They emphasize how exposure to gadgets and online platforms, particularly YouTube, contributes significantly to their children's English language acquisition. These observations highlight a practical need for English proficiency driven by technological immersion.

“As a parent, I believe it's crucial for my child

to learn the English language in today's generation. Children nowadays are often immersed in gadgets and technology, such as YouTube. They practice English through YouTube videos, picking up words that they sometimes integrate into their own way of communicating with others. Currently, children find it easier to grasp the English language.” [Participant 10]

“Learning English is important for my kid. In today's world, it's like having a key to unlock a lot of doors. It opens up opportunities, helps in communication, and broadens horizons. Plus, it's the language of a lot of important stuff, like technology, science, and business.” [Parent 8]

### Theme 3: Cognitive Benefits

Some of the parents (n = 5) believed on the cognitive benefits of learning the English language. Parents recognize the cognitive and cultural benefits of bilingualism. They highlighted how proficiency in English enhances cognitive function and fosters a deeper appreciation of diverse cultures, suggesting a broader perspective on the importance of language acquisition beyond mere utilitarian considerations.

“It's super important for my kid to learn English. Everywhere you look, English is the language people use for school, work, and technology. If my child is good at English, it opens so many doors for them. Plus, knowing more than one language is great for their brain and helps them understand different cultures.” [Parent 13]

*Question 2.* How did parents take an active part in child's learning process in the English language at home?

### Theme 1: Parental Monitoring and Guidance

All of parents (n = 16) were hands-on in teaching and guiding their children to learn the English language. There was a shared emphasis on parental monitoring and guidance throughout the learning process. Parents actively track their child's performance, interact when needed to provide guidance or additional resources, and take proactive measures to ensure their child's continued academic advancement in English language learning.

“Yes! Sometimes by reading some books.” [Parent 15]

“I’m right there with my kid, helping them learn English for school. I help them with homework, make sure they practice by reading and doing language activities, and I keep up with how they’re doing in school.” [Parent 3]

“I’m pretty hands-on when it comes to my child’s English learning journey. I make it a point to attend parent-teacher meetings and keep tabs on what’s happening in the classroom. If there’s something I can do to support their learning, I’m all in.” [Parent 7]

“We’re all in when it comes to helping our kid with English at school. We keep tabs on their progress, talk to their teachers, and make sure they’re not falling behind. If they need extra help, we’re there to provide it.” [Parent 13]

#### Theme 2: Academic Involvement

Some parents (n = 11) identified their personal strategies actively participate in their child’s English learning journey. These strategies include helping with homework assignments, facilitating regular practice through reading aloud and language-focused activities, attending parent-teacher conferences, and maintaining communication with teachers to monitor progress.

“Yes, I’m hands-on with my kid’s English learning at school. I keep tabs on what they’re doing, help with homework when needed, and make sure they’re staying on track. Sometimes I even sit down and go through lessons with them to make sure they’re getting it.” [Parent 9]

#### Theme 3: English-rich Atmosphere

Some parents (n = 7) emphasized the concept of English-rich household. They prioritize creating an environment saturated with English stimuli. This involves incorporating English into various aspects of daily life, such as reading English books together, watching English media, and integrating English into routines and activities.

“Creating an atmosphere rich in English for my child is my top priority at home. This involves using English when we communicate with children, using it in our everyday routines and conversations, and giving them access to

English-language media like games, movies, and novels.” [Parent 5]

“I prioritize the use of English in our home. We talk to each other in English, and I make sure they have access to English books, movies, and games.” [Parent 9]

“At home, we keep the English learning going. We read books together, watch English shows or movies, and talk about stuff in English. I try to make it fun, like turning learning into games or challenges. And we make sure to use English even in everyday stuff, like asking how their day was or what they want for dinner.” [Parent 2]

“At home, we try to make English learning part of our everyday routine. We read together, watch movies in English, and play word games. It’s all about making it fun and natural.” [Parent 14]

#### Theme 4: Interactive Language Use

Some parents (n = 7) also adapt to interactive language use where they actively engage with their children in English language learning at home. This includes using English in daily conversations, correcting errors, and ensuring a consistent English-speaking environment.

“Yes, I speak with my child in English during our daily interactions at home to ensure proper practice and correction.” [Parent 13]

“I actively involve my child in our daily interactions by encouraging them to ask questions, express themselves, and discuss a variety of issues in the language. When needed, I also gently correct their grammar and pronunciation to foster a positive and encouraging learning atmosphere.” [Parent 6]

“Absolutely! We weave English into our daily conversations as much as possible. Whether we’re chatting about our day, discussing a movie we watched, or just goofing around, I always encourage using English. It’s all about practice, practice, practice!” [Parent 1]

“I’m always encouraging my kid to talk and ask questions in English. If they make a mistake, I gently help them fix it, so they feel good about



learning.” [Parent 7]

#### Theme 5: Use of Technology

Most parents (n = 15) emphasized the utilization of technology and multimedia resources to facilitate English learning with their children. This included the use language learning apps, internet resources, and interactive online platforms to supplement traditional learning methods. Incorporating technology into English language learning enhanced accessibility, interactivity, and engagement, catering to the digital-native preferences of contemporary learners. This also involved activities such as coloring books with pictures and words, watching English YouTube videos, and exposing children to different accents and dialects through music and videos. The incorporation of visual and auditory stimuli helped in sparking curiosity and enhancing language comprehension.

“Sometimes, we color books with pictures and words, sparking curiosity, and also watch English YouTube videos.” [Parent 16]

“We’ve got a few strategies up our sleeves. One is setting goals and rewards to keep motivation up. Another is using technology, like language learning apps or online resources. We also make sure to expose them to different accents and dialects through media or conversations with friends from different backgrounds.” [Parent 3]

“I do lots of things to help my kid practice English, like playing games, using apps, and even talking in English when we’re doing regular stuff like shopping or cooking.” [Parent 11]

*Question 3.* What were the instructional strategies of parents in aiding their child to learn the English language?

#### Theme 1: Selective Approach

Most parents (n = 13) were selective on what strategies they do to help their child learn the English language. They actively engaged in the process of curating content, filtering out materials that do not meet their criteria for suitability. This process involves a careful evaluation of factors such as age-relevance, engagement, alignment with school curriculum, and reliability.

“Yes, I ensure the content my child watches on YouTube is appropriate.” [Parent 7]

“When it comes to filtering materials, I’m pretty selective. I look for stuff that’s age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and engaging. I steer clear of anything too dry or overly complicated. It could be stuff that resonates with my kid and keeps them excited about learning.” [Parent 13]

“We’re pretty selective about the materials our kid uses for English learning. We look for stuff that’s age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and, most importantly, effective. No point wasting time on things that don’t work.” [Parent 10]

“Yeah, I’m pretty picky about the materials my kid uses for English learning. I look for stuff that’s age-appropriate, engaging, and aligned with what they’re learning at school. And of course, I make sure it’s accurate and reliable.” [14]

#### Theme 2: Emphasis on Learning Need

A notable theme across respondents was the emphasis on aligning instructional materials with their child’s learning needs and preferences. Parents (n = 9) prioritized selecting resources that resonate with their child’s interests and complement what they are learning in school, ensuring a cohesive and supportive learning experience.

“I take great care to select educational resources that align with my child’s interests and learning needs. This would include looking into reliable sources, evaluating their applicability and efficacy, and making sure they are suitable for my child’s level of proficiency.” [Parent 4]

“I pick out learning stuff that matches what my kid likes and needs. I check that it’s good for them and fits with what they’re learning in school.” [Parent 2]

#### Theme 3: Use of Supplementary Materials

Parents (n = 6) also use different supplementary materials to augment their children’s English language learning. They think that these materials were not readily available in schools. These include coloring books, ABCD cards, interactive games, educational websites, language-learning applications, storybooks, language apps, audiobooks, flashcards,

and educational games.

“We use coloring books, ABCD cards, and other materials commonly used by parents.” [Parent 7]

“At home, we supplement with things like language apps, audiobooks, and educational websites. I also like to find real-life opportunities for them to practice English, like joining a community sports team or volunteering at a local charity. It’s all about finding ways to make learning immersive and meaningful.” [parent 15]

“At home, we like to supplement with things like educational apps, language learning websites, and books tailored to our child’s interests. It’s all about finding what works best for them and keeping them engaged outside of school.” [Parent 13]

*Question 4.* Why was it important for parents to have discretionary influence over the learning materials for their child?

Theme 1: Understanding Child’s Need

Parents (n = 16) possessed a unique understanding of their children’s needs, including their motivations, challenges, and interests in learning English. This understanding highlighted the importance of parental discretion in selecting appropriate learning materials tailored to individual children.

“Yes, as a mom, I believe it’s essential to know the best ways to engage my child in learning English.” [Parent 10]

“Absolutely, parents should have a say in their child’s English learning materials. Every kid is different, so what works for one may not work for another. Plus, we know our child best and can choose materials that align with their learning style and interests. It’s all about giving them the best possible chance to succeed.” [Parent 11]

Theme 2: Individualized Attention

Parents (n = 9) highlighted the role of parental discretion in providing individualized attention to children’s English language learning. They argued that parental involvement fosters a supportive learning environment, demonstrating to children that education is valued and that parents are

invested in their success.

“Certainly, it is critical that parents have the autonomy to choose the English language learning materials their kids use since it enables them to adapt materials to their child’s specific requirements, interests, and learning style. This flexibility helps parents to better assist their child’s learning and give them individualized attention.” [Parent 2]

“Absolutely! Parents know their kids better than anyone else, so having a say in their learning materials is crucial. We know what motivates them, what challenges them, and what sparks their curiosity. Plus, being involved in their learning shows them that we value education and are invested in their success.” [Parent 5]

## 6. Discussion

*Question 1.* What were the perceptions of parents about the importance of learning the English language for their child?

English is one of the official languages of the Philippines and is widely used in education, government, and business (Martin, 2014). Proficiency in English is often seen as essential for academic success and future career opportunities, both locally and internationally (Chureson, 2013; Paez, 2018; Suzuki, 2022; Vasquez, 2013). This study found out Filipino parents recognized that mastering English could provide their children with a competitive edge in the global job market, opening doors to better employment prospects and higher earning potential. For instance, one parent said that “*learning English is important for my kid. It’s like handing them a passport to the world*” [Participant 6]. This reflected their perceptions regarding the value of the English language. They believed that English fluency could provide their children with access to global opportunities, enabling them to deal with social environments, communicate effectively with a broader audience, and compete successfully in a globalized economy.

In today’s Philippine households, Children are frequently exposed to English through gadgets, online platforms, and entertainment media such as YouTube, movies, and video games (Rolando Jr., 2023). This immersion in

English-speaking environments facilitated natural language acquisition and reinforces its practical importance in everyday life (Aharul, 2023). One parent explained that “[my child] practice English through YouTube videos, picking up words that they sometimes integrate into their own way of communicating with others” [Parent 10]. This integration into their everyday speech reflected how digital media not only serves as a source of entertainment but also as an effective educational tool that enhances English language proficiency among children. This practical immersion in English through modern technology manifested its importance and utility, making it a crucial part of children’s linguistic and cognitive development in the contemporary Filipino context.

Filipino parents value learning the English language for their children due to its significant role in education and career opportunities, access to global information, the influence of digital media, cognitive benefits, and the historical and cultural ties to English. These factors specifically highlighted the importance of English proficiency in securing a better future for their children.

*Question 2.* How did parents take an active part in child’s learning process in the English language at home?

Parental discretion in their children’s English language learning process at home is characterized by hands-on monitoring and guidance, academic involvement, the creation of an English-rich environment, interactive language use, and the utilization of technology and multimedia resources. These strategies reflect parents’ dedication to supporting their children’s linguistic development and ensuring their success in acquiring English language proficiency. Through their active participation and engagement, parents had a vital role in fostering a nurturing and stimulating learning environment that empowers their children to excel in English language learning (Pan et al., 2022).

One parent said that “I’m right there with my kid, helping them learn English for school. I help them with homework, make sure they practice by reading and doing language activities, and I keep up with how they’re doing in school” [Parent 3]. As the educational landscape progresses and parental appreciation for the significance of education grows, Filipino parents are increasingly assuming an active role in their children’s learning journey at home. Motivated by the widespread application of English across various industries, parents were willing to take proactive steps in teaching

their children the language within the home environment (Chavez et al., 2023; Chavez, 2022; Santos et al., 2022). The recognition of parents regarding the crucial role they play in shaping their children’s learning experiences demonstrated an increased level of awareness among parents regarding the significance of promoting English language proficiency from a young age.

Specifically, parents highlighted that “creating an atmosphere rich in English for my child is my top priority at home” [Parent 5] “to make English learning part of our everyday routine” [Parent 14]. The emphasis placed by parents on creating an English-rich environment at home signifies a recognition of the critical role that language immersion plays in their children’s linguistic development. By prioritizing the integration of English into daily routines and interactions, parents are actively fostering a supportive learning atmosphere that facilitates language learning (Ronderos et al., 2022). This deliberate effort to saturate the home environment with English stimuli suggests an understanding of the importance of consistent exposure and reinforcement in enhancing language proficiency (Mak et al., 2023; Weisleder et al., 2024). Additionally, by making English learning a routine aspect of family life, parents are not only providing their children with ample opportunities for practice and reinforcement but also instilling the value of continuous learning and skill development (Verhagen et al., 2022). Most parents were found to be actively engaged in the learning process of their children explaining “I’m hands-on with my kid’s English learning at school. I keep tabs on what they’re doing, help with homework when needed, and make sure they’re staying on track” [Parent 9].

The proactive approach demonstrated by parents in creating an English-rich environment at home reflects a form of discretion in their parenting practices. Discretion is the autonomy and control parents exercise in determining the methods and strategies they employ to support their children’s language learning endeavors. By prioritizing the integration of English into daily routines and interactions, parents exercise discretion by actively shaping the learning environment within their household to promote language immersion and proficiency. For instance, one parent said that “I take great care to select educational resources that align with my child’s interests and learning needs” [Parent 4]. This intentional decision-making process underscored parents’ autonomy in

recognizing the critical role of language immersion in their children's linguistic development and their ability to adapt their parenting practices accordingly. This study realized that parental discretion not only involved intentional selection of strategies to aid the learning in children, but most importantly, considering which of these strategies work for them well.

*Question 3.* What were the instructional strategies of parents in aiding their child to learn the English language?

Parental discretion, as found in this study, includes not only the deliberate selection of ways to help their children learn, but also the critical consideration of which of these strategies are most beneficial for their children. This comprehensive component of parental discretion required a thorough awareness of each child's individual learning style, strengths, weaknesses, interests, and preferences. Parents engage in a continual process of assessment and adaptation, constantly analyzing the efficacy of various ways and adapting their strategies to better meet their children's dynamic needs.

Previous studies explained that child development is subject to external influences that play a crucial role in facilitating normal developmental processes (Ananta & Kurniawa, 2023; Hernández-Torrano & Ibrayeva, 2020; Lee & Junehee, 2017). The roles of specific home contextual elements in children's English development may range across aspects of English development. The effects of family structure, home language use, and literacy environment varied across socio-cultural contexts and ethnic groups (Rahardjo et al., 2022; Skinner et al., 2022; Suswandari, 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). Though these, students gain insights and a positive attitude, as well as the ability to act appropriately based on societal norms and values and communicate effectively (Elbes et al., 2022). Because of the complexity of societal landscape for learning, parental discretion extends beyond the mere implementation of educational techniques to have a holistic approach that considers various factors influencing their children's learning experiences. This may include considerations such as the child's developmental stage, cognitive abilities, emotional well-being, and socio-cultural context. By considering these diverse elements, parents exercise discretion in designing their support to create a personalized and supportive learning environment that optimizes their children's academic growth and development.

One parent confessed that *"I pick out learning stuff*

*that matches what my kid likes and needs. I check that it's good for them and fits with what they're learning in school"* [Parent 16]. Another parent said that *"I ensure the content my child watches on YouTube is appropriate"* [Parent 7]. Parental discretion thus involves a comprehensive consideration of these contextual factors in designing support strategies designed to each child's needs. This may include selecting learning materials and media content that align with a child's interests and needs, as well as ensuring appropriateness and relevance to their educational objectives. For instance, parents may carefully curate educational content on platforms like YouTube to ensure its suitability and alignment with their child's learning goals. This deliberate selection and customization of learning materials exemplify parental discretion in action, as parents manage the complexity of educational resources to optimize their children's learning experiences.

*Question 4.* Why was it important for parents to have discretionary influence over the learning materials for their child?

The findings from this study underscored the importance of parental discretion in guiding their children's English language learning journey. Parents demonstrated a deep understanding of their children's individual needs, motivations, challenges, and interests, emphasizing the significance of tailoring learning materials to suit each child's unique characteristics. Parents who exercise discretion play a proactive role in promoting their children's educational development and creating a healthy and caring learning environment at home. They understand the value of personalizing training to their child's individual needs and preferences, resulting in a personalized and effective learning experience.

Most parents believed that they need to be responsible enough in exposing their children to different teaching strategies. They said that *"...parents should have a say in their child's English learning materials. Every kid is different, so what works for one may not work for another... we know our child best and can choose materials that align with their learning style and interests"* [Parent 11] and *"this flexibility helps parents to better assist their child's learning and give them individualized attention"* [Parent 2]. This understanding highlighted the role of parental discretion in selecting appropriate resources that align with children's learning styles and preferences, ensuring a personalized and engaging learning experience. Parental discretion empowered parents

to actively participate in their children's education, providing them with a sense of agency over their learning process. Parents recognized that every child is different, and what works for one may not work for another (Chavez et al., 2023; Chavez, 2022; Harris et al., 2022; Hill, 2022). Therefore, they advocate for the importance of having a say in their child's English learning materials, enabling them to select resources that align with their child's individual learning style and interests. This flexibility allows parents to adapt their approach to better assist their child's learning and provide them with the individualized attention they need to thrive academically.

This study was able to frame the concept of parental discretion into several contexts—(i) understanding child's needs, (ii) adaptation, (iii) flexibility, (iv) autonomy, (v) supportive environment, (vi) reflection. Although previous studies were able to identify these concepts under parental involvement as an umbrella term, there was limitation on how studies interpreted them. This comprehensive examination of parental discretion emphasized the necessity of considering the various dimensions and settings in which parents exert control over their children's education. By defining parental discretion within these essential aspects, this study provides useful insights into the complex and dynamic nature of parent-child educational interactions, laying the groundwork for future research and practice in this critical field.

## 7. Conclusion

Parents' perceptions of the importance of their children learning English were deeply rooted in their aspirations for their children's future success. They recognized English proficiency as a crucial tool for accessing global opportunities and enhancing their children's competitiveness in a globalized economy. This understanding was reflected in their proactive efforts to expose their children to English through various mediums, such as digital media, emphasizing its practical importance in everyday life and career prospects.

Parental involvement in their children's English language learning process at home was characterized by several strategies like hands-on monitoring, academic engagement, the creation of an English-rich environment, interactive language use, and the utilization of technology. Through these strategies, parents demonstrated their commitment to fos-

tering a supportive learning environment that promotes language immersion and proficiency. This proactive involvement underscored the role of parental discretion, where parents exercised autonomy and control in shaping their children's learning experiences to align with their individual needs, interests, and preferences.

Parental discretion extended beyond the mere selection of educational materials to encompass a holistic approach that considered various factors influencing their children's learning experiences. This included adaptation to their child's evolving needs, flexibility in exploring diverse approaches, autonomy in decision-making, and reflection on their strategies' effectiveness. By embracing parental discretion, parents played a fundamental role in creating personalized and effective learning environments that optimized their children's academic growth and development. This comprehensive understanding of parental discretion emphasized the importance of considering the dynamic interaction between parents and children in educational settings, paving the way for future research and practice in this critical area.

## Author Contributions

The contributions of the authors were as follows: Conceptualization, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; methodology, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; validation, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; formal analysis, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; investigation, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; resources, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; data curation, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; writing—original draft preparation, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C.; writing—review and editing, N.A.C., J.T.C., and J.V.C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study is not publicly accessible due to specific reasons, e.g., confidentiality agreements, privacy concerns. As a result, direct access to the data is restricted. However, interested researchers may request access to the data by contacting the corresponding author. Requests will

be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and access may be granted subject to the approval of the relevant institutional review board and adherence to confidentiality agreements. Any additional conditions or limitations on data use will be communicated to the requesting party upon approval.

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