



## Parental involvement in English as foreign language learners' education: Challenges and solutions in a post-pandemic era

Ghadah Al Murshidi<sup>a</sup>, Sumaya Daoud<sup>b,\*</sup>, Ruwaya Al Derei<sup>a</sup>, Hebat Alhamidi<sup>a</sup>, Waheeda Jabir<sup>b</sup>, Neema Sayed<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> United Arab Emirates University, United Arab Emirates

<sup>b</sup> Al Ain University, United Arab Emirates

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### ABSTRACT

The role played by English language young learners' parents in enhancing literacy skills has become central since the outbreak of COVID-19 which imposed the online mode of education. This increase in the magnitude of the parents' involvement in their children's education has called for the exploration of the new role mandated on the parents to take the lead in their children's learning of English. The current study seeks to investigate the challenges, solutions and recommendations as seen through the lens of 28 parents of elementary school children in the UAE who reflected on their role in improving their children's performance in the English language subject during and after the pandemic. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews that consisted of three main questions on the parents' challenges, solutions and suggestions regarding their involvement. The study adopted a mixed method approach that incorporated Grounded Theory Approach for the qualitative data, and descriptive statistics for the quantitative data. Findings show that most parents indicated that the most significant challenges they had were their lack of English proficiency and their children's lack of motivation. The strategies that were implemented by the parents were mainly using audio-visual resources and hiring tutors. On the other hand, they suggested that teachers and schools should provide support for the children and the parents. The implications of the study are significant for language educators, policymakers, and parents. For example, the findings of the study show that there should be a division of labour between schools, teachers and parents by having schools provide training for the parents, and effectively communicate with them. Curriculum developers should design content that targets the children's independent learning.

### Introduction

#### *The role of parents*

Within the education setting there are many stakeholders which play a role in interacting with the student in a teaching and learning context. The student themselves, the teacher, parents, and other academic staff all influence the student in their learning and can play a role in developing academic skills. Parental involvement in student achievement has been shown by many studies to be crucial and a mediating factor and academic outcomes (Balala et al., 2021; He et al., 2015; Otani, 2020; Xiong et al., 2021). Overall parental input is seen to benefit a student in their education (Tan et al., 2020). Castro et al. (2015) noted that there is a direct correlation between parental involvement and a child's academic achievement in that those parents who set high expectations for

their children often had children who achieved academically strong results. However, Hill (2022) acknowledges that parental input in a child's education does not solely focus on assisting them with homework and it can look at a variety of ways such as assisting with transitions to college as well as volunteering within a school.

Studies in a variety of countries such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Balala et al., 2021), Japan (Otani, 2020) and Oman (Al-Qaryouti & Kilani, 2015) all have demonstrated that parents are often keen to be involved in their children's education. There is also a role for the teachers to play in this scenario. Kalayci and Ergül (2020) found from the study of English language teachers that many teachers who were involved in this study (72 %) felt that they would benefit for more training on how to involve parents in students' language learning and how to develop appropriate techniques to do this.

Within the United Arab Emirates, it was found that engagement,

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [sumaya.daoud@aau.ac.ae](mailto:sumaya.daoud@aau.ac.ae) (S. Daoud).

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achievement and mathematical disposition in 4th grade students was also linked to mathematical skills and also added that early input in mathematics from the home environment could also lead to development of numeracy skills (Balala et al., 2021). Therefore, parental habits have a role to play in influencing a child's education. Otani (2020) also noted that in Japan, parental involvement plays a key factor in students' academic achievement. Parental input does not remain static but changes as the student develops and Otani (2020) noted that there was a positive relationship between parental involvement in academic achievement and highlighted that this was a stronger correlation in younger children compared with older children. The role which apparent plays in the student's education can change as a child moves from elementary school to secondary and right through to tertiary education (Hill, 2022).

Xiong et al. (2021) noted a difference between the performance of children and the parental involvement in that those children who performed poorly in academic testing had parents who were less willing to be involved. Therefore, parent- child interaction is key.

#### *Benefits of parental involvement in English language learning*

Within the country of the United Arab Emirates, there is an increased role in the use of the English language both within the schooling system and within day to day society. Since the country was formed in 1971, the increased rates of globalization have resulted in the use of the English language to communicate with the global markets which play a role within the country. The majority of schools both private and government within the United Arab Emirates have been effectively using the English language in order to enable students to become more proficient and ready to enter the global markets which the UAE provides. Government schools within the United Arab Emirates have increased their hiring of overseas English language teachers in an effort to continue to boost the levels of English within government schools. The country also sees a large number of private schools from countries such as America, Australia and the United Kingdom, all of whom teach through the medium of English and have a large majority of English as first language teachers. Within both schooling systems, English begins at kindergarten level and continues right up until the end of secondary school.

Language learners have been seen to take into consideration parental feelings and expectations and Sugita-McEown and McEown (2019) noted that this was recorded as higher for more proficient English learners compared with less able English language learners. Therefore, parental beliefs and interactions could be seen as vital in the message this imparts to their children with regard to language learning.

KG parents in Oman ( $n = 314$ ) demonstrated that there was no difference with regards to gender, between mothers and fathers when it came to practising reading and writing skills. Also, the socio-economic status also proved to have no significant impact when it came to parental input for reading and writing (Al-Qaryouti & Kilani, 2015), therefore highlighting the impact of the home environment.

Ghahdarjani and Rahimi (2021) found that parental involvement was directly related to academic achievement when considering English language learning achievement in high school students. Cosso and Yoshikawa (2022) also noted, from a meta-analysis which involved 39 studies, that there was a positive association between children's academic outputs and parental involvement. They noted that it was not only parental involvement which affected these outcomes but also the involvement of the school which played a role. Otani (2020) noted the parental input in children's education often manifests itself in the attitude of the child towards their learning in that parents who are involved generally have children who have a better attitude towards their learning.

Within the United Arab Emirates Al Jefri and Areepattamanni (2019) studied 17,469 fourth grade students in relation to various aspects of their reading. They noticed that there was a strong positive correlation between early literacy activities and reading dispositions,

reading engagement and reading achievement. Interestingly this relationship was found for both English language learners and Arabic also. In the light of these findings Al Jefri and Areepattamanni (2019) advocated that within the United Arab Emirates there needs to be a greater awareness of the parental input with regards to early literacy activities and they also noted that the home environment and the parental input can have a great impact upon a child's confidence when it comes to reading. This is where there is a gap in the literature.

#### **Literature Review**

##### *Activities which parents can be involved in their child's English language learning*

There are many ways in which parents can be involved in their child's education, however, there have been limited studies conducted within the Arabian Gulf region in this area. Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2016) conducted a study which involved administering a questionnaire to 391 Omani parents looking at parental involvement in children's English education. Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2016) highlighted that the research done in this area in previous studies often focused on Western ideas and principles and was carried out within a Western context. Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2016) noted Omani parents did place a value on parental involvement in their children's English language education and attributed this to increased academic achievement within this area. They also place value on visiting their children's schools and getting involved in school activities. Positively, Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2016) that neither working, family size or parental perceived ability to help children did not have a negative effect on their involvement in their children's education.

Types of parental involvement suggested by Castro et al. (2015) were the supervision of activities, setting high expectations, maintaining clear lines of communication and encouraging children to read on a daily basis. Tan et al. (2020) highlighted six factors that they found had a positive effect on student achievement. These were: "parental academic expectations, parental support for child learning, parent-child discussion of school matters, parental participation in school governance and events, parent and child reading together, and parental emphasis on education"

Kalayci and Ergül (2020) found that as students move through the education system and become more mature parental involvement in their English language learning tends to decrease. This involvement often covers the supervision of homework but interestingly Kalayci and Ergül (2020) also found that they described parental involvement as providing "social and emotional assistance" to students in their English language learning. Otani (2020) noted that the way parents are involved in their child's education varies depending on the age and the grade level of the child. They find that for 4th grade students parents tended to check their homework and talk about their school work and this was the form of parental involvement in this age group. As children moved up the school the study also looked at students in 8th grade and find that this was not the case in that the parents talked less to the children about the school work and only provided help when checking homework in the 8th grade.

The tools which parents use to assist children can also vary. Ghahdarjani and Rahimi (2021) shared that parents in Iran, when assisting their high school students in learning the English language, used tools such as listening to CDs flash cards and ensuring that their children did their homework as a specific time as methods to aid them in their learning, as well as supplementary books to add their children's English learning. Reading English books with children as well as allowing them to watch educational TV programmes were seen as another method of developing English language skills (Madima & Makaanise, 2021). Therefore, this is one area where parental literacy habits could play a role.

## Obstacles to parental involvement

Areepattamannil et al. (2015) have noted that parental attitudes can impact children's perceptions when it comes to different topics of study within the UAE. Areepattamannil et al. (2015) reported that students within the UAE had higher levels of motivation to study mathematics if they perceived that their parents felt positively towards mathematics and considered it an important subject. When considering factors which influence parental ability or motivation to encourage in their children's English language learning, it is important to understand if the parents see their input as vital to the learning. Madima and Makananise (2021) noted that South African parents thought that the responsibility for their children's English language development mainly rested with the school therefore they were less involved.

Caridade et al. (2021) surveyed 333 school personnel and asked their opinions on parental involvement. Results showed that school personnel noted low levels of parental involvement, giving the lack of motivation as a reason for this. Caridade et al. (2021) suggested that there does need to be some training and involvement of parents in the education of their children. Madima and Makananise (2021) found that parental fluency and confidence in the English language played a large part in their contribution to the child's English education as those parents who were more competent in English felt they had more ability to have an input.

Research is showing that the socioeconomic status of students' parents also plays a part in their role and involvement in their education. Hajar (2019) found that those parents who were more affluent and had higher levels of socioeconomic status contributed in ways such as sending their children to private schools and providing tutors to allow them to master the English language. Hajar (2019) advocated for the recognition of the informal out-of-school factors which affect the English language learning of university-level students. Families of low socioeconomic status tended to have less involvement in school-based activities and this resulted in lower levels of academic achievement in these children (Zhang et al., 2021).

Chen et al. (2022) found that in China, those parents who were more motivated and also more anxious to enable their children to learn Chinese language characters, read more books to their children, therefore identifying positive parental habits. They noted that parents with lower socioeconomic status may have less access to language learning resources, as well as less time to spend with their children in their language learning. They describe parents of higher economic social status as more "ambitious" when it comes to their children's language learning.

Interestingly, Dawadi (2020) found that in a Nepalese context, there was generally a lot of parental involvement when it came to children aged 15 and 16 years old preparing for an English language test. Dawadi (2020) found that a little parents lacked knowledge about the actual test they put increased pressure on their children to revise for their English test.

Several parental factors were noted to play a role when parents were more educated. These were "parental learning support at home, parental academic emphasis, and parent-teacher communication" (Tan et al., 2020), however, the factor which had the largest effect was noted by Tan et al. (2020) to be parental academic expectations.

## Research questions

The current study is meant to fill the research gap and offer implementable solutions to real challenges that face young learners of English and their parents in the UAE. The purpose of the study is to delve into the details of the parent's perception of the challenges they face as they try to help their children improve their skills in EFL. Specifically, the researchers seek to answer the following research question:

Research Question 1: What are the challenges to the parents' involvement in their children's education from the parents' point of view?

Research Question 2: How have the parents dealt with such challenges when their involvement was most needed during the period of online education?

Research Question 3: What solutions do the parents suggest to overcome the challenges that hinder their involvement in enhancing their children's English language education?

## Participants

The participants were 28 parents, 24 females and 4 males who are 28–40 years old. Their educational backgrounds ranged from high school to master's degrees. The selection criteria had more to do with the age group of the children rather than their parents' demographic characteristics. The children were kindergarten to elementary school when the survey was conducted. This age group was selected because they are not independent learners of the school curriculum and they usually need parental support to achieve their learning outcomes.

## Methodology

A total of 28 semi-structured interviews were carried out with Emirati parents of children ranging from kindergarten to elementary school. After transcribing the interviews, two trained coders open-coded the data from three interviews, and then initial themes and codes emerged from iterative and inductive analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The themes were discussed, analysed, and categorized by the coders to construct a set of core categories. This set along with the interview questions constructed a coding paradigm that guided the rest of the independent coding process by each coder. This process of axial coding advanced the analysis producing more refined and differentiated categories. After coding, the inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen Kappa which is a statistical measure of the level of agreement beyond chance between the coders and the value was ( $\kappa = 0.73$ ) indicating moderate to substantial agreement between the coders. The data that were coded differently were later discussed and negotiated by the coders until a 100 % agreement was reached. This stage of qualitative analysis was deemed necessary to capture an in-depth insight into the parents' view of their involvement in their kids' language learning.

In order to have an overall understanding of data indications, a quantitative analysis was carried out through descriptive statistical analysis of the data by calculating the frequencies of each category.

## Grounded theory

Grounded Theory has been adopted because the purpose of the current investigation is to achieve an in-depth understanding of the parents' perception of the challenges they face while being involved in their children's EFL learning, and how to overcome them. This approach to the data elicited from the parents assumes no preconceived patterns of the parents' attitudes, hence such patterns/ theories emerge from the data as a result of a well-structured coding process and analysis. Therefore, using Grounded Theory as a qualitative research method leads to the development of new theories grounded in data, offering deep insights into the research questions the researchers are attempting to answer.

## Findings

### 1 Challenges

In response to the second question, parents indicated that one of the biggest challenges they faced was that English was a foreign language for both the children and the parents. Based on their elaboration on this point, the parents believed that, unlike Arabic as a school subject, English is hard to teach to their kids because the parents themselves learned English as a foreign language and barely practiced it outside the

class setting. This made it a hard subject for them as students, which casts a negative impact on them in striving to support their children. In addition, many participants mentioned that their children constantly switched back and forth between languages due to their lack of familiarity with English. Notably, none of the participants expressed any concern about English overshadowing Arabic for their children. The overall attitude was a concern for the children to learn proper English rather than a concern that English might take over Arabic. Hence, they used a variety of solutions to help their children achieve better English proficiency.

Another recurring challenge was the children's lack of motivation, as stated by 40 % of the participants. They indicated that it was difficult for them to get their children interested in studying English. This problem was partially due to the difficulty of the subject for the children and parents themselves. Besides, a parent indicated that she was challenged by having to make her child understand the importance of learning English. The lack of motivation challenge was more often mentioned by parents of younger children such those in kindergarten or early elementary school. This is an age when children are yet to see the true value of learning and incline more towards playing. An interesting challenge was mentioned by a parent who herself was reluctant to emphasize learning English because she believed that mastery of English would be at the expense of Arabic, and therefore had concerns that English might replace their first language Arabic. The frequency of the most recurring challenges can be seen in [Table 1](#).

### 1 Ways followed to face the challenges

Responses to the second question showed a range of ways by which parents integrated the English language into their children's routines. Almost all participants mentioned interacting with tools in English, from card games to picture books and comics. One participant particularly mentioned playing oral games in English, or using the language in casual games such as 'hide and seek'. It became evident that many parents sought a balance between fun and learning, with one parent saying, "I allow him to watch educational videos in English so he can have fun and at the same time learn something." This reflects that parents believe that this strategy is effective, especially when given that the children are between the ages of 5 and 10, and are consequently in need of any form of amusement combined with their education.

Several parents mentioned that to enhance their children's language proficiency, they hired a tutor. This was mentioned by seven out of thirty participants, with one interviewee emphasizing the importance of practicing with a native speaker of English.

Reading and writing exposure from home is critical to mastering foreign language literacy skills, which in turn will foster school literacy and help achieve academic success ([Panferov, 2010](#)). Frequent practice of English induced by parents' help was mentioned to be a major method employed to help children improve their language skills (listening and reading specifically) and at least 14 respondents reported having arranged this in some form or another with reading being the primary practice observed. One parent reports that "I bring short stories to train him about [in] listening and reading." This practice is conducive to improving vocabulary too, as implied by a parent who "reads to him imaginary stories in English before going to sleep that can help my child

**Table 1**

The frequency of each challenge in the data as reported by the parents.

#	Challenge	No. of parents reporting the challenge
1.	English being a foreign language EFL	24
2.	Lack of time	5
3.	Parents' Lack of knowledge and skill GE	10
4.	Translanguaging	4
5.	Lack of Motivation	13

understand that word because whenever he doesn't understand what it means, he asks, so I explain to him." Although one parent reported that she encourages her child to write in his diary using English, most others, it would seem, have not reported giving writing practice at home. However, reading from the narrative, some responses indicate that these practices may be inconsistent, and sometimes even come off as merely potential suggestions to improve language skills as opposed to ones that are actively employed by the parents to effectively help their own children in ESL.

Interacting in the English language was reported to be another contributor to helping children learn the language better. Almost all respondents mentioned this in ways that mean some variation of the following: conversing in English in the household, using English during play hours or conversing with friends in English. In the words of a parent "[I] allocate time for him, for example, an hour every day, to talk to him about his day in Arabic and then English, and to ask him questions to measure his personal growth." Most parents who mentioned this also is deemed to have perceived interacting in English during daily conversations to be beneficial in improving English. According to [Enright and McCloskey \(1985\)](#), "Children learn language (i.e., how to communicate successfully) through purposeful interaction with the L2 environment." However, two parents, which we presume may be incompetent in English themselves or due to lack of time, or because of any other plausible reason, also mentioned hiring tutors to help their children better their English. One parent reports having hired a tutor to "be with him most of the time at home" in order to increase language fluency. One parent even mentioned this as a potential solution to the challenges faced while helping children learn English. However, the extent to which this may be helpful will depend on the hired tutor, though it is fair to say that this strategy might well work because individual tutoring can be tailored to suit the specific needs of the student and develop study skills ([Ireson, 2004](#)). The most frequently mentioned ways of addressing the challenges can be seen in [Table 2](#).

### 1 Suggestions to overcome the challenges

Children achieve more in school, and by extension in language learning, when schools and families collaborate ([Henderson & Mapp, 2002](#); [Pomerantz et al., 2007](#); [Reynolds & Clements, 2005](#)). Keeping up with schoolwork was mentioned to be one of the solutions that parents deem viable in overcoming the challenges faced while helping children learn the English language. One parent says that she sometimes "communicates with the teacher to get other advice in order to raise my child's level of language." Four other respondents have mentioned this in a similar fashion, i.e.; maintaining communications with the teacher at school or ensuring that the child is up to date with the schoolwork. It can be assumed that parents gauge these as helpful to a tidier and more effective language learning experience. Usage of the internet to enhance language learning is also a widely presumed solution, being mentioned by an overwhelming majority of parents. YouTube videos seem to have attracted much attention in amassing a viewership of children whose parents allow them to watch them for educational and language learning purposes. This preference comes as no surprise since, according to [Neumann and Herodotou, \(2020\)](#), "children were reported to spend on average 1.39 h each weekday and 1.47 h each weekend day viewing YouTube videos". While some parents may let their kids watch videos completely in English, some others let them watch both in their native (i.

**Table 2**

The frequency of ways the parents used to deal with the challenges in the data.

#	Way	No. of times it was reported by the parents
1.	Using interactive visuals	38
2.	Creating a study routine	14
3.	Interacting in English	27
4.	Hiring tutors	8



e.; Arabic) and English so as to better comprehend the content. One parent reports that she allocates time for her child to “watch funny and useful children’s films, as long as they are in English”. While this parent is strict that the language be English, another state that she “divided their [children’s] time to watch cartoon once in Arabic and once in English.” This method of learning English via videos (YouTube in particular), is indeed a feasible option worth employing to learn English since children’s minds can be stimulated to recall vocabularies and sentences by regularly watching short films or easy songs (Mozes, 2020). As a last mention, parents have also suggested miscellaneous methods, including frequent reading and writing practices to overcome ESL difficulties. Table 3 shows the most prominent solutions offered by the parents.

## Discussion

Drawing upon research and the parents’ responses to the interview questions, it is evident that the parents’ role in enhancing their children’s English language proficiency is becoming more and more significant.

Apparently, parents themselves were interested in being players in their children’s educational achievement. However, they reported their concerns about their lack of familiarity with the language, curriculum and teaching methods (Epstein, 2018). They thought they were not equipped to help their children in mastering the language, which made them constantly look for resources to help with the process. To encourage the parents’ engagement, schools should empower the parents by undertaking the responsibility of providing the needed resources for and effective communication with the parents. This can be implemented through training the parents, communicating with them effectively and involving them in planning, decision making and as volunteers in some school activities related to the English language subject.

As for lack of motivation, parents complained that it was a serious obstacle in the progress of their children’s learning. The parents were struggling with their children’s disinterest in learning English as a foreign language, which caused anxiety for both the parents who were using extrinsic motivators and the children who had no interest in the subject. The children showed a low level of engagement due to their lack of intrinsic motivation which was needed for them to sustain their efforts to learn a foreign language. Several parents indicated that this situation impeded the progress in their children’s language proficiency and caused continuous tension during study time for the family. This situation shows the significance of the role of the teachers at school who should be trained and resourceful while dealing with the problem of lack of motivation because the problem persists outside the classroom and is brought up again at home when the parents have to encounter the child’s resistance to be engaged in language homework.

To overcome the challenges, the parents used certain strategies some of which were described as effective by the parents, others were not. For example, using interactive visual resources was mentioned several times as an effective resource to engage the child. To utilize this resource, the parent would use flashcards, story books, models, crafts, etc. to facilitate the child’s learning. However, these parents themselves indicated that children sometimes lose interest and get bored especially if visual resources had been used repeatedly. While this problem can be attributed to the child’s personal interest and choice, it also shows the parents’ lack

of familiarity with the teaching skills required to keep children engaged and interested to improve their language skills. Parents who realized that they do not possess the skills to overcome such problems either felt frustrated and stressed, or they gave up completely by seeking help from someone who has these skills by hiring a tutor. This could be a costly solution for some families because tutors are highly paid in the UAE relatively speaking, but this solution has advantages for working mothers who do not have the time to take care of their kid’s education and for mothers that do not have the needed teaching skills.

The solutions that the parents proposed but necessarily were able to fully implement were mainly related to three main ideas: using the internet/ technology, setting small study targets and focusing on skills rather than theory in the EFL subject. Speaking of using technology, nowadays this educational resource is so rapidly growing and changing that most parents can barely keep up with the most cutting-edge technology that can be utilized for learning and teaching. In fact, educational technology is taking over to the extent that it is threatening the role of human teachers, and likewise parents in the education process. Therefore, it can be used vigilantly to promote independent learning by the children themselves. This can facilitate learning and speed up its pace because children, who are widely recognized as digital natives, are given choices of *what* and *how* to learn according to their interest and personal experiences. As for, *setting small study targets* as a solution, it can help reduce the burden by breaking down complicated tasks into smaller parts that take less time and effort if they are done segmentally than if done as one accumulated task. This was described as an effective solution by several parents that help develop good study habits, avoid procrastination, and keep in touch with learning on a daily basis. In addition, the parents’ responses show that they are aware of the need for learning and acquiring skills of the language rather than learning theoretical facts about the language. They stressed that teaching at school and at home should be tailored to improve the skills of reading, speaking, writing and listening because they are the key for learning other subjects and for becoming more competitive in education, and at the long run in career.

The parents’ reflections and existing literature support the notion that the challenges can be addressed in various ways. Generally, some parents use extrinsic motivators such as reward and punishment, while other parents believe in encouragement and having dialogues with their children. In fact, empathizing parents can have a significant impact on shaping learning experiences that resonate with their children’s personal preferences and motivations (Kohlhoff & Barnett, 2013). Such an approach that is highly personalized can improve the children’s sense of ownership of their choices and intrinsic motivation, therefore, enhancing engagement in English language learning.

Furthermore, the findings of the current study underscore the challenges and solutions are related to the EFL context. Some of the findings can be generalizable to a similar situation with other subjects, however, due to the communicative nature of languages it can be claimed that the solutions the parents offered are unique to a foreign language learning context, more specifically English due to its powerful global status.

## Conclusion

Through the narratives of the parents of elementary school children, the present study sets out to explore the challenges to their involvement in enhancing their children’s English language learning, ways the parents use to overcome them, and proposed solutions. Despite the parents’ genuine interest in contributing to their children’s language learning, parents are often faced with obstacles that are related to either their kids’ lack of motivation or the parents’ lack of familiarity with English and its teaching skills. The solutions that the parents offered can be effective. However, the burden should not be on the shoulders of the parents alone because they need support from the educational system at school. Educators, school principals, and researchers can be involved in a training that targets parents who need and are willing to improve their

**Table 3**  
The frequency of solutions the parents suggested to deal with the challenges.

#	Solutions	No. of times it was reported by the parents
1.	Keeping up with schoolwork (setting small study targets)	5
2.	Using the internet	7
3.	Focusing on the skills not theory	21

language, teaching skills, or technological literacy for education. Curriculum designers can take advantage of children's growing interest in technology by creating curricula that foster independent learning by the kids themselves. This can make a big leap in the future of education, and simultaneously alleviate the anxiety of the parents undertaking the teaching burden at home to improve their children's language proficiency.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study, the researchers recommend that:

- School management should create new policies whereby children do most of the learning within the school day time and in an atmosphere that enhances natural language acquisition rather than formal classroom learning.
- Parents should be trained not only on how to support their children but also to help them become responsible for their own learning (independent learners).
- Feasible action plans should be implemented to create a motivating environment for EFL learning at school. This is primarily the responsibility of school principals and teachers.

In addition to the above recommendations, it is recommended that future research addresses the current questions from the perspective of teachers and school principals who are directly involved in the challenges and solutions discussed in the current study. Such research would provide a comprehensive view of the scene and therefore may lead to findings that offer solutions that can be adopted by decision-makers.

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## Declaration of Competing Interest

There are no conflicts of interest associated with this submission.

## Appendix

### Interview Questions

The parents were asked the following questions

- How do you help your child enhance their performance in English language subjects?
- What are the challenges you face in teaching your child the English language?
- How do you think these challenges can be overcome?

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