

Beyond the classroom walls: exploring parental involvement on children's interest development in EFL learning (A case from Indonesia)

Naning Tri Wahyuni & Tan Bee Tin

To cite this article: Naning Tri Wahyuni & Tan Bee Tin (12 Apr 2024): Beyond the classroom walls: exploring parental involvement on children's interest development in EFL learning (A case from Indonesia), Education 3-13, DOI: [10.1080/03004279.2024.2340548](https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2340548)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2340548>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 12 Apr 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 70



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Beyond the classroom walls: exploring parental involvement on children's interest development in EFL learning (A case from Indonesia)

Naning Tri Wahyuni ^{a,b} and Tan Bee Tin ^a

^aSchool of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics, The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand; ^bFaculty of Education, Universitas Islam International Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study reports the findings of a case study that followed a group of Indonesian primary school EFL learners (10–11 years old). They were observed in school and at home and interviewed with their parents. The study highlights various ways children can develop an interest in learning English and how parents help shape their children's interests. Four students who demonstrated different patterns of interest development were selected for detailed analysis. Through these cases, the study attempts to understand the role of parents in developing interest in EFL learning. All four child participants were provided with a similar supportive learning environment at school, suggesting that their differences may have primarily been attributed to their different home learning environments, parental involvement, and parenting styles.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 3 December 2023
Accepted 29 March 2024

KEYWORDS

Child ELLs' interest development; situational and individual interest; interest development and language achievement; parental involvement; and parenting styles

1. Introduction

Studies have shown that parental involvement is vital to children's academic performance (Boonk et al. 2018) and literacy development (Bonci et al. 2011). Their constructive involvement can strongly predict their children's educational success, and early intervention is critical (Rowley and Schulenberg 2007). Various studies have focused on parental involvement in children's education using a quantitative approach. However, there is a shortage of qualitative studies examining the role of parents in children's learning regarding the domain of English foreign language (EFL) learning and interest development, which brings this study into the picture, investigating the role of parents in developing children's interest in EFL learning and their academic performance in an urban Indonesian context.

Among the modern families in Indonesia, the existence of English as the world's lingua franca is socially embraced and educationally accommodated. With the advanced technological information erasing the barrier between countries, parents have become more aware of the need to prepare their offspring for the global world's challenge. Thus, learning English becomes a precedence. In most cases, the value of learning English has been passed down through generations and well-educated parents start arranging their children's English education from primary school (Susanty et al. 2021). In parallel with the increasing interest from parents, the number of young Indonesians who aspire to get a better and higher level of education is rapidly growing, and many of them aim to study overseas, requiring English mastery.

CONTACT Naning Tri Wahyuni  naning.wahyuni@auckland.ac.nz

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

In Indonesia, English is placed as a foreign language and is taught formally. Exposure to the language and voluntary learning are often minimal in-home environments. Despite parents having great interest and positive attitudes towards their children's English education, many do not possess sufficient skills to be directly involved in their children's learning (Susanty et al. 2021; Wahyuni 2022). Most parents thus put their trust in a formal system. This situation is often not ideal for effective learning since school learning is limited in period and strictly curriculum-guided (Malik et al. 2021). Hence, there is an urgent need to find ways for parents to get involved in their child's learning, particularly at home. The home environment will provide a sense of familiarity and relaxation essential for natural language learning. Hence, parents need to be involved in their children's learning, enabling them to explore their interests and exercise their efforts and goals (Susanty et al. 2021; Wahyuni 2022).

This paper describes four cases of Indonesian families in which the child participants exhibited unique circumstances in their interest development in EFL learning, distinguishably found connected to their parent's involvement. It explores the following: What roles do parents play at home in developing their child's interest in EFL learning and academic performance? How and why might those children in the study differ in their academic success and interest due to their parents' influence? The literature review starts with a critical review of parents' role in children's EFL learning and its impact on the children's learning. Subsequently, interest was introduced as an essential concept for successful language learning while parents' potential roles in cultivating their child's interest were discussed.

2. The interplay between parental roles and children's success in EFL learning

Studies have highlighted parents' essential roles in their child's learning growth (e.g. Hernández-Alava and Popli 2017), particularly in language learning development (Bonci et al. 2011). This condition easily applies to any language, including second/foreign language learning (Graf 2011; Pinter 2011). Parental involvement in shaping children's interests and proficiency in English foreign language education is profoundly important. While formal educational settings play a crucial role, the influence of parents at home significantly impacts a child's language learning journey. The study reported here investigates the multifaceted relationship between parental involvement and children's development of interest in foreign language learning, drawing insights from EFL cases in Indonesia.

Parental involvement encompasses a spectrum of activities and behaviours parents engage in to support their child's learning and development. As previous studies pointed out, the involvement ranges from providing a conducive and supportive environment at home to participating actively in their child's learning activities (Bonci et al. 2011; Harris and Goodall 2007). Exposure to English language outside the classroom is crucial for reinforcing learning and building fluency. Parents can foster an environment that supports their children's academic growth and interest development by actively participating in their children's EFL learning (Karıbayeva and Boğar 2014). Parents can create a language-rich environment by incorporating English into daily routines, such as reading English books together, watching English-language movies or TV shows, and engaging in conversations in English. These immersive experiences enhance language skills and foster a genuine interest in the language. Parents also can be actively involved in their child's daily learning activities. Active involvement in their child's English language learning activities demonstrates parental support and reinforces the importance of education. Whether it's helping with homework, practicing vocabulary together, or engaging in language games, parents can actively participate in their child's learning journey. This collaborative approach strengthens parent-child bonds and enhances learning outcomes (Boonk et al. 2018; Harris and Goodall 2007).

The involvement also includes fostering a positive attitude and aspiration, which was critical for their language learning accomplishment (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Graf 2011). Bandura (1977), in his *Social Learning Theory*, emphasises the importance of social interactions and

observational learning in shaping behaviour. Thus, parents serve as primary social agents in a child's life, modelling attitudes, behaviours, and values (Detweiler, Comer, and Albano 2010). In EFL cases, children observe their parents' enthusiasm and positive attitude towards English language learning, influencing their interest and motivation. Regarding aspiration, a study claimed that parents with expectations help determine their child's learning achievement (Loughlin-Presnal and Bierman 2017). However, other studies also highlight that effective parental involvement should entail setting realistic expectations and providing constructive feedback. While it's essential to encourage and challenge children, undue pressure can lead to stress and disinterest. By acknowledging their efforts and celebrating small milestones, parents can boost their children's confidence and motivation to learn (Gunderson et al. 2018; Henderson and Lepper 2002). Thus, parents should better balance expecting and praising their children.

In relevant cases of Indonesian families, parental involvement was determined by their parenting styles, which refers to how parents act and support their EFL learning (Wahyuni 2022). Some scholars (Martinez-Pons 2002; Sanders and Sheldon 2009; Walker et al. 2005) proposed various types of parenting involvements which form the mechanism of parental involvement, such as *modelling*, *encouragement*, *facilitation*, *instruction*, and *reinforcement*. Baumrind (1971; 2013) additionally proposed four types of parenting styles: *authoritative* (democratic), *authoritarian* (disciplinarian), *permissive* (indulgent), and *uninvolved* (neglectful). Aligned with their models, the study discovered (See Wahyuni 2022) that *modelling* was represented by how parents act as excellent models, inspiring their children to like learning the language and engage with learning. *Encouragement* was exemplified when parents gave the child reassurance and motivation to learn new things associated with their English learning. *Facilitation* was demonstrated in the various learning resources parents provided for their children to enhance their learning. *Instruction* reflects the reinforcement parents give their children by teaching them (direct instruction) or giving them access to instruction and assistance (indirect instruction such as additional tutorials or private tuition). *Reinforcement* manifested in establishing good learning patterns and behaviour at home. The study also discovered that *authoritative* (democratic) parents tended to be more balanced in demonstrating the five types of involvement, as *permissive* (indulgent) parents exhibited more roles in *facilitation* and *encouragement* and were weaker at *instruction* and *enforcement*. Those studies laid a foundation for the present article to connect the dots between parenting practices and the children's interest development in EFL learning.

3. Leveraging interest in second/foreign language learning

Children learning a second/foreign (SL/FL) language need active and repetitive efforts where their self-willingness and interest are crucial. Learning is even more effective when students are naturally exposed to the language and immersed in its practical use (Graf 2011). Hence, language teaching should be built primarily on creating opportunities for students to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings and understand meaningful language (Lightbrown and Spada 2013). The teaching can integrate students' learning styles, preferred activities, content-related materials (Pinter 2017), goals, and values into the instructions (Harackiewicz and Hulleman 2010). Children learning SL/FL need to discover the meaning and significance of the language to improve their connection to the language and, thus, promote their interest and motivation.

As widely discussed by scholars, interest helps spice up learning (e.g. Harackiewicz, Smith, and Priniski 2016); particularly reviewed here is learning English as a second or foreign language (e.g. Tin 2013; 2016). Interest is formed when a person interacts with an object of interest. When students are interested in certain activities, they voluntarily engage with them, happily prioritise the problems that arise, and tenaciously address them. A learner's interest makes persistence feel effortless and increases the possibility of achievement (Renninger and Hidi 2016). Interest affects people's motivation to act, behave, and learn (Ainley 2008) and promotes positive emotion and well-being (Reeve, Lee, and Won 2015). Interest stimulates attention (Lequia 2011) and influences goal setting (Harackiewicz and Hulleman 2010).

Renninger and Hidi (2016) proposed two types of interest: *individual* and *situational*. Individual interest comes from a uniquely personal source and is embedded in a person's characteristics. Individual interest is often connected to personal significance, positive emotion, high value, and increased knowledge. It retains longer and has more impact on long-term learning. In contrast, situational interest is considered situationally bound and stimulated by the object's attractiveness at a particular period of learning engagement. Situational interest is observed when students engage with a learning subject and activity). Both interests are interconnected and influence learning development, as examined in this study.

Research on children's interest in SL/FL learning remains scarce, although numerous studies have been conducted in other domains and education in general. Studies on interest-related matters in education and second/foreign language learning also mainly focused on adult learners, using a quantitative approach and an experimental design (e.g. Bai, Nie, and Lee 2022; Cancino 2021; Lee and Pulido 2017). The present study uses qualitative and quantitative data to fill the missing gap by focusing on children's development of both interest types (situational and individual) in EFL learning in their natural learning environments (school and home) to gain a comprehensive understanding.

4. Study's background information

The subject focus of the study was four selected children and their respective parents. Choosing the children involved a school those children enrolled to, EFL classes the children belong to, and their respective English teachers. Six months of school observation was conducted to investigate the interest development of the selected children, covering both individual and situational types. Grade achievement was added to the examination, adding to the children's learning profile and possibly connecting it with their interest growth. At the same time, the home-based investigation was carried out with four selected children and their parents to observe their home learning activities and parents' involvement. All participations were ensured to be based on voluntary action. Signed consent forms from a participating school, teachers, students, and their parents were obtained, and all participants were informed about the research following the guidance and procedure from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC, Ref. 022682). Details of information about participants and the recruitment process are described in the following sections.

4.1. The participating school

The school was bilingual and located in an urban area in Indonesia. Both the Indonesian language (*Bahasa*) and English were used in instruction and equally enforced in daily communication. The school implemented the Indonesian national curriculum taught in *Bahasa* and the Cambridge curriculum taught in English. The school provided elementary-level education for children aged between 6 and 12 (grades 1–6). Boys and girls were separated into different classes in their senior years (grades 5 and 6). This separation affected the choices for grade and class participants, as the school only allowed grade 5 students to participate. Thus, the participating children came from different classes based on gender (girl's and boy's classes). Although gender is mentioned here, it is not included in the analyzed factors (See the limitation of the study).

The school was selected because of its unique double curriculum and the ever-developing system for English practice. The students were from various backgrounds of English mastery and learning experience, which provided an opportunity to select participants with different English-related situations. The subject was taught four days of the school week, targeting both language and communicative competence. Each day's lesson covered 70 70-minute period, and thus, the students received 280 minutes of weekly instruction (4×70). English was also used in Math and Science Cambridge classes: each subject was delivered in three 70-minute lessons (a total of 420 minutes for both school subjects per week).

The school had at least four classes in each grade. Two participating classes from grade five were first chosen (one boy's and one girl's classes) based on their responses to the participation invitation and teachers' aptitude. The girls' class consisted of 25 students, and the boys' class was composed of 23 students between 10 and 11 years old. The students had at least formally learned English for four years since enrolling.

Teachers were purposely selected, targeting similar levels of teaching skills and experience. Teachers with equivalent aptitude were expected to give the children equal benefits from the same quality of instruction and, thus, reduce the possibility of bias from the teacher-related factors on the children's interest and motivation, which then, the examination could focus on the home-based (parental) influence. Two certified English teachers, both female in their mid-thirties and having at least ten years of teaching experience, helped with the study.

4.2. The participating families

The children were chosen to represent different interest and motivation levels in EFL learning (low – mild – high), English achievement (low – average – high), and their parents' interest, motivation, and involvement in their EFL learning. The children's interest data was collected from the first administration of the Individual Interest Questionnaire (IIQ). The achievement data was obtained from students' learning portfolios provided by the teachers. Parents' data were gained from parents' background questionnaire administered at the beginning of the study. Of the 48 students, two boys and two girls were selected to participate in case studies with their respective parents. The four child participants were named Ario (male), Elisa (female), Hana (female), and Zidan (male).

4.3. Data collection

The study employed a case study approach, an in-depth investigation examining a single individual and group within its real-life context (Yin 2018). The research covered school and home settings, focusing on the four sets of participants and the surrounding learning environment. The investigation was conducted at school for one academic semester, examining students' interest and growth in grade achievement. Data was collected from nine classroom observations, interviews with the teachers and the four students, and the administration of two questionnaires, one for assessing students' situational interests and another for measuring students' individual interests. The two questionnaires (See Appendices 1 and 2) were adapted from previous interest studies (Rotgans 2015; Rotgans and Schmidt 2018), piloted with Indonesian students of similar age, and modified to meet the situational circumstances of Indonesian children's ELLs. The situational interest questionnaire (SIQ) was administered nine times at the end of each class observation, and the individual interest questionnaire (IIQ) was administered three times (prior-term, mid-term, and end-of-term). The students' grade achievements were collected from the three tests: (1) before the study, (2) mid-term test, and (3) End-term test.

Home data was collected from five home visits for over six months. Children's learning activities, materials, and resources were observed and recorded. Interviews with parents and children were conducted during each visit, examining the child's interests, EFL learning home activities, and parents' involvement. Interviews were conducted in both English and *Bahasa*; participants could answer in *Bahasa* or mix it with English at their convenience.

4.4. Data analysis

Quantitative and qualitative tools were used in data analysis, and pseudonyms were applied to the data coding and presentation. The quantitative data from questionnaire results were first grouped based on the heading (individual interest questionnaire/IIQ, situational interest questionnaire/SIQ) and following the questionnaire's administration (e.g. IIQ1, IIQ2, SIQ1, SIQ2). The test results were

grouped based on the time taken (e.g. pre-test, mid-term test). Both questionnaire and test results were quantitatively analyzed using *descriptive statistics* to measure data variability and mean values for the three factors (IIQ, SIQ, and grade achievement). The changing of mean values was illustratively drawn in charts to highlight the altering patterns of each factor examined. The changing or growth patterns were then connected to the whole construct measure to see the development patterns of both types of interest investigated (situational and individual) and grade achievement. As presented in the subsequent findings and discussion sections, each participant’s growth figures were compared and analyzed connected to their parental involvement.

5. Case study’s finding

This section zooms into the interest growth of each child participant using data collected at school and home. The students’ English test scores were added to connect the children’s interest and achievement, as seen in Table 1 and Figure 1.

The figures above show changing mean values representing each child’s interest and achievement growth over the study time. The interest profiles show the different interest trajectories of the four students (Ario, Elisa, Hana, and Zidan). Despite being in the same school learning environment, they reacted differently to the lessons, as demonstrated in their situational interest scores. Their individual interest, however, shared some similarities, which were increasing, except for Hana’s figure, which remained neutral. Despite the differences in their interest growth, the four students’ test scores improved as the study ended. The subsequent sections present and analyze parental involvement, the development of children’s interests, and their achievements.

5.1. Ario and Elisa: students with a developed interest in authoritative parents’ influences

As seen in Figure 1, both Ario and Elisa distinctively demonstrated interest growth (situational and individual) even though the fluctuating patterns differed. Situationally, Ario was constantly interested in his English lessons throughout the program (between 5 and 6, $\bar{x} = 5.7$). Ario emphasised, ‘I always enjoy my English lessons because they are fun with many activities’. His individual interest was similarly high (between 5 and 6, $\bar{x} = 5.5$). Ario had distinctively shown an individual interest with

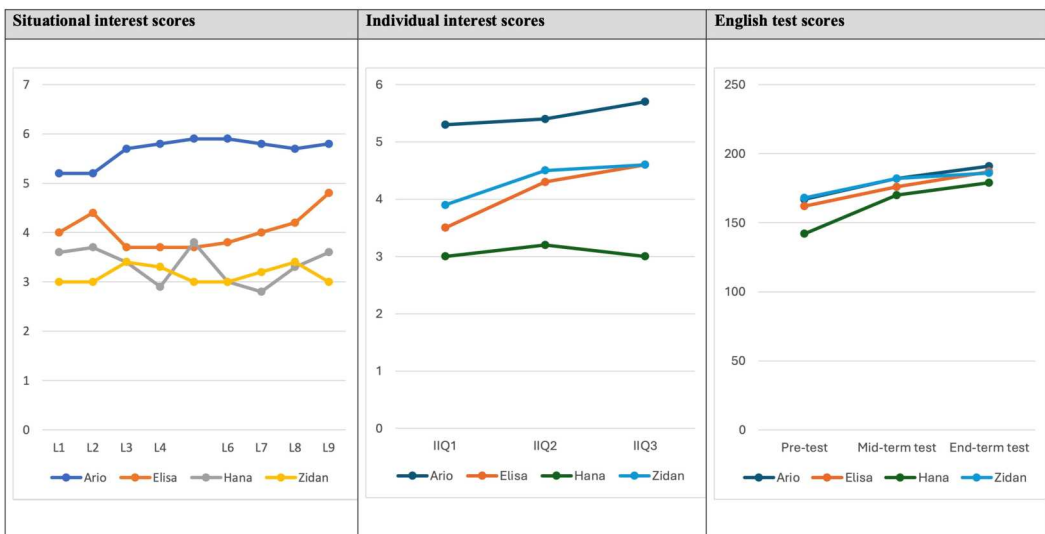


Figure 1. Interest profiles and grade achievements of the four students.

Table 1. Interest profiles and grade achievements of students.

Student	Gender	Situational interest (SIQ) scores										Individual interest (IIQ) scores			English test scores (Combined scores of written and practical tests out of 200)				
		L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	L8	L9	Mean (\bar{x})	IIQ1	IIQ2	IIQ3	Mean	Pre-test	Mid-term test	End-term test	Mean (\bar{x})
Ario	Male	5.2	5.2	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.3	5.4	5.7	5.7	167	182	191	180
Elisa	Female	4	4.4	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	4	4.2	4.8	4	3.5	4.3	4.6	4	162	176	187	175
Hana	Female	3.6	3.7	3.4	2.9	3.8	3	2.8	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.07	142	170	179	164
Zidan	Male	3	3	3.4	3.3	3	3.2	3.4	3	3	3.1	3.9	4.5	4.6	4.3	168	182	186	179

L = Lesson (e.g. L1 = Lesson 1, L2 = Lesson 2 etc.), \bar{x} = score average.

a specific goal since the beginning of the study, as he disclosed during the first interview, 'I have been very interested in learning English since I was in preschool. I want to study abroad when I am big'.

Elisa's interest in her lessons was unsteady initially and slightly grew afterwards, with a notable increase in the last two lessons. Elisa divulged that her low prior interest in English was due to her weak connection with the value of the language in her life. Following her parents' persuasion, she tried to learn by saying, 'I am not personally interested in learning English. My Mom asks me to study hard as having good English skills helps me in other school subjects'. As expected by her parents, Elisa was a bright student aiming to excel in all school subjects, which she later found enabled her to grow her interest with a more personal connection to learning and its values. Elisa's interest (situational and individual) significantly increased (3–5 with $\bar{x}=4$ and $\bar{x}=4.1$, respectively).

Ario and Elisa's parents were motivated and exhibited an outstanding and supportive attitude concerning their children's EFL learning. They were *authoritative* (democratic) parents actively involved in *modelling, encouragement, facilitation, instruction, and reinforcement*. Both families had a similar view on academic purpose; they saw English as an instrumental tool for their children's educational success and future career opportunities. They were deeply involved in shaping and inspiring their children's educational orientation: to become a doctor for Elisa and work in international relationships for Ario. Ario's parents constantly showed to love learning (*modelling*) and regularly did shared learning.

On the other hand, Elisa's parents felt their English skills were insufficient; thus, to inspire Elisa, they sent her to have overseas experience and join Cambridge School's international community. Both children benefitted from the intervention, as their interests grew through constructive learning experiences. Elisa shared her learning journey by saying, 'Now, I realize I can have more opportunities with good English skills. I want to study Medicine in English-speaking countries'.

Both families set up learning routines for their children. The difference was that Ario was assisted by his mother and father, while Elisa's parents appointed a private teacher to help Elisa with her daily learning. Shared reading time was also frequent in Ario's family, as they also did regular book shopping, which allowed Ario to choose resources to help with his EFL learning. The mother shared: 'We have reading time together; reading bilingual series of books, *WHY*. We also bought DVDs and CDs for English conversation, listening, and learning it together'. Due to their busy work schedule, Elisa's parents relied heavily on the private teacher with occasional help from a family member with an English education background. However, the mother made sure to keep Elisa's progress in check.

Both parents patiently accommodated their children's needs and interests despite the discipline and high expectations. They shared their views on the importance of interest to motivate their children. Ario additionally enrolled in a private English institution to receive private coaching at his request. Ario's parents also supported his competitiveness by encouraging him to join English competitions (e.g. *Spelling Bee*, speech, poem reading, and storytelling). Elisa was also provided with various learning resources, such as joining English Camp and visiting overseas programs that interest her. The children's English teacher commented on the parents' support, 'They are excellent, supportive, and easy to work with'.

Studies (Loughlin-Presnal and Bierman 2017; Piquart and Ebeling 2019) discovered that parents' expectations manifested in their upbeat attitude, motivation, and involvement promote successful learning, as seen in Ario's and Elisa's cases. Their parents initially focused on academic goals and grew as their children experienced developed personal values connecting to their interests (Harackiewicz, Smith, and Priniski 2016), aspirations, and self-regulatory learning (Han 2021). Both children also embraced their parents' beliefs and expectations and responded to their parents' support, utilising opportunities, and developing their agency in navigating their learning. Ario highlighted his parents' support by saying, 'My parents are very supportive, encouraging, and helpful'. Ario found his parents' high expectations motivating, as he said: 'My parents want me to do well at school, and I want to make them happy and proud of my achievements'. Parents' support and the children's

interest and effort resulted in their achievement, as previously discovered by other scholars (Boonk et al. 2018).

Authoritative styles from both families also suggested helping the children develop self-efficacy, thereby gaining better achievement. Other studies also reflect this finding (e.g. Baumrind 2013; Garcia and Gracia 2009; Hayek et al. 2022). As seen in the test results, Ario's grade showed the highest among the four, increasing from 167 to 191 ($\bar{x} = 180$). Elisa's grades also rose from 162 to 187 ($\bar{x} = 175$), and she was in third place (after Ario Zidan).

5.2. Zidan and Hana: students with less school learning interest under permissive parents' care

Table 1 shows that Zidan and Hana had a similar figure regarding their situational interest (English lessons) in which both children showed a mild interest ($\bar{x} = 3.1$ and 3.3 , respectively). Zidan initially disclosed: 'I like my English class at school. Only most are boring and too easy'. A later investigation revealed Zidan's English proficiency, which was higher than most of his peers, which made the school boring for him. Hana also shared her less interest in learning English at the first interview, 'I am not interested in English, not so much. I like science'. Despite showing the same less interest in school lessons, they exhibited a different growth in their individual interest, with Zidan experiencing an increase (3.9 – 4.6 , $\bar{x} = 4.3$) and Hana remaining undeveloped (stayed at 3) throughout the program. Zidan's developed individual interest was later found to be connected to his home environment, which was highly immersed in English. In contrast, Hana's undeveloped interest was connected to a lack of interest and parents' intervention.

Zidan was discovered as an example of a successful English language learner and an efficient language acquirer who was highly exposed to English use at home. Zidan enjoyed exercising his English as part of daily life, appreciating its practical values. Both his parents also frequently communicated with Zidan in English. Zidan spent his leisure time playing English instructional games and watching English TV channels. He was an active *YouTuber* and aspired to become a successful *YouTuber* by gaining international audiences, a goal he self-consciously connected to his need to learn English. He constantly improved his English through practical use, such as developing English content on his *YouTube* channel and joining online group forums. In one of the interviews, he disclosed that he used online discussion forums to broaden his worldwide networking, improve his communication, negotiation, and advertisement skills, and develop ideas for his channel. He used Google Translate, a digital dictionary, and his mother's assistant, who graduated from an Indonesian university in *American Studies* and was very good at English.

Hana was shown to lack interest in English since the beginning of the study (situational and individual). Unlike Zidan, who was self-reliantly navigating his learning, Hana still developed responsibility, awareness, and effort in her learning routine. Her parents disclosed that she needed constant parental supervision, which was something they could not frequently afford due to their busy work schedule. As a result, they focused on providing Hana with sufficient learning resources (books and digital access). They also encouraged her to learn, and she did well at school. The parents also highlighted Hana's less interest in English and decided to give Hana time to self-explore and enjoy her free childhood. Accordingly, they lowered their expectation of Hana's school achievement by expecting Hana just at least to finish her schoolwork and do her best in her English classes; as the mother repeatedly mentioned during the home visits, 'She is still a child and cannot be forced to do something she does not want to. So, we let her enjoy her childhood time and be happy. Our child's well-being is the most important'.

Both Zidan and Hana's parents were considered permissive parents, performing well at *facilitation* and *encouragement* but with weak resolve in *reinforcement* and *instruction*. Zidan's parents were good at *modelling* since the family liked learning and communicating with the language. However, like Hana's parents, they did not want to impose their expectations too much on their child concerning his formal education. Zidan's parents understood his interest was not in

academic-related goals. They approved his learning style, allowed him to follow his learning venture and managed his activity. They provided Zidan with sufficient resources, such as full access to a computer, iPad, and television with a fast internet connection and a small library at home with a good collection of English storybooks. The mother explained: 'We are not into academic purposes, as we realize that our son's interest is not on that. Our target is for Zidan to be good at communication skills.' As permissive parents, they did not enforce daily learning routines on Zidan.

Zidan might be less interested in school learning. However, the freedom he was given, and the supportive parents helped him discover enjoyment and value in exercising his learning style. Zidan was the epitome of a natural language learner, with good role models from his parents as active English users. A study posited that parental input and influence through modelling help children develop their learning (Hernández-Alava and Popli 2017; Krisbergh 2022) since children look up, follow, and take inspiration from their parents. As a result, Zidan's individual interest grew and as his proficiency improved, his school learning was hardly a challenge. Zidan's grades improved from 168 to 186 over a semester ($\bar{x} = 179$), just second to Ario. Both were among the highest achievers at school (English subject).

Hana is probably the best example of a child who is not interested but can maintain good grades. Her scores increased from 142 to 179 ($\bar{x} = 164$). It was the least compared to the three children with more developed interests. The increased grade, however, signifies her keen effort despite her tepid interest. Hana shared her obligation to learn English as it was necessary for her academic success and made her parents happy. In the last interview with parents present, Hana shared that interest was not always essential for getting good grades and that studying hard was the key to successful learning. Her parents seconded her view. Hana's case implies that interest does not always determine students' learning success, mainly when the parameter is good grades (Köller, Baumert, and Schnabel 2001). Unlike Elisa and Ario, Hana's case shows that academic goal is not always connected to the emergence and development of interest in contrast to previous studies which claimed a positive relationship between the two variables (Harackiewicz et al. 2008; Hulleman et al. 2008).

Both cases of Zidan and Hana exemplified that a *permissive* parenting style can have different results on the children's developed interests. Permissive parents tend to be caring and nurturing and can bring up a successful and creative student (García and Gracia 2014), just like Zidan. The nurturing style suggested is suitable for language learning, which needs more practical use, enjoyable experience, and sustained interest. Hana's case, however, represented that *permissive* parenting does not always work to develop a child's interest in EFL learning. Without solid *enforcement* and *instruction*, it might hinder the child from exploring other opportunities beyond their current goals, which limits their chances to experience meaningful learning and prevents them from further exercising their abilities, thus preventing them from developing interest. Her English teacher disclosed, 'Hana can achieve better grades if she shows more interest and engagement since she is good at other subjects, such as science'. Hana's case opposed a study by García and Gracia (2014) that advocated the benefits of permissive practices. Instead, this study suggested that not every child benefited from *permissive* parenting; instead, they could reach their potential with more push on *enforcement* and constant supervision.

6. Insights from the four families: the parental sparks

The study's findings strengthen the empirical evidence and practices on the essential roles of parents (in addition to teachers and schools) in children's interests and learning development in EFL learning, particularly Indonesian families (e.g. Susanty et al. 2021; Wahyuni 2022). All four child participants were provided with a similar supportive school learning environment. However, they reacted differently to their interest and thus, their different development was suggested to have primarily been attributed to their various learning environments at home, parents' involvement, and the beliefs and expectations the parents imposed on their children associated with their education. Other factors contributing to their interests were the children's prior interests, goals and personal value references.

Aligned with these findings, previous studies have claimed the significant role of prior interest (Krapp, Hidi, and Renninger 2014), goal and personal value (Harackiewicz and Hulleman 2010) in interest development. As discovered in the study, parents can help shape their children's interests, goals and target values, which later help further establish their interests.

In terms of their ways and paces, each child developed specific goals, directed their learning activities, and responded to influences from the surrounding environment and adults' interference in a manner that aligned with their individual learning preferences and objectives. The impact of parents' influence on the child's well-developed interest is presented in Ario's and Zidan's self-directed behaviour in acquiring and developing their English proficiency based on their needs and interests (Sorić and Palekčić 2009), driven by their mastery goals and aspirations (Han 2021). Initially, parental beliefs and expectations played on stimulating their interest in language learning, Ario's academic success, and Zidan's communication skills. However, both boys later discovered their goals and assessed their need for mastering English independently, signifying their independence and well-developed interest (Hidi and Renninger 2015).

Elisa and Hana both initially had no interest in learning English. Their academic goals and parent expectations initially affected their efforts to keep learning. However, Elisa's efforts and learning development enabled her interest to grow. However, Hana did not experience any growth of interest as her learning spectrum was limited. Both girls, however, were able to maintain their good grades, supporting studies which claimed interest and achievement are not always mutually related (Köller, Baumert, and Schnabel 2001) and other studies that claimed interest as an essential factor in determining achievement (e.g. Harackiewicz, Smith, and Priniski 2016) which prominently also discovered in EFL learning (Asgari, Ketabi, and Amirian 2019). Since Hana, as the least interested child, also achieved the most minor grade improvement, it is suggested that the latter claim was stronger to ensure the child's achievement sustainability as their learning progressed. Their cases also highlighted the critical role of parents' beliefs and expectations (Loughlin-Presnal and Bierman 2017), as both families exhibited differently. Elisa, who had parents with high beliefs and expectations, was shown to be more developed in interest and achievement than Hana. The two cases also suggested that the *authoritative* style was better practice for children who still need more constant supervision and guidance (Baumrind 2013).

The cases also show the importance of personal value experience in language learning, as Ario, Zidan, and Elisa demonstrated. The three children actively exercised their learning venture through various activities utilizing their parents' support towards their goals, aspirations, and targeted mastery, thereby enabling them to experience improved values (Wang, Shirvan, and Taherian 2021). The meaningful experience helped them establish their interest as their learning progressed. Their cases supported a previous study by Roure and Lentillon-Kaestner (2021) that claimed a positive relationship between students' interests, goals, and competence. On the other hand, Hana has a low interest, which has exposed a more significant disadvantageous influence on her efforts and perseverance. Inconsistent and infrequent parental involvement did not help her attitude, motivation, and actions. Her limited learning spectrum also prevented her from experiencing values in learning English beyond school-related targets, further preventing her interest from growing. Ultimately, her interest was undeveloped, and her effort and perseverance remained unchanged. Her case highlights the urgency of nurturing interest through parents' constant and direct involvement. In contrast to a study that highlighted parents' beliefs and expectations as essential factors for a child's successful learning (Loughlin-Presnal and Bierman 2017), Hana's case shows that even though beliefs and expectations were critical, for some children, parents' direct involvement on *enforcement* and *instruction* is a necessity to first establish child's interest and motivation, as both essential in learning success (Renninger and Hidi 2016; 2022).

7. Concluding thoughts

This study highlights EFL cases on the transformative impact of parental involvement, underscoring its significance in shaping the future generation of proficient English speakers. Parental involvement

is a cornerstone in fostering children's interest and proficiency in EFL learning. Some critical involvements demonstrated by parents from this study are as follows: *First*, creating a language-rich environment at home and exposing children to English through various activities, conversations, and media messages. *Second*, fostering children's motivation and self-efficacy in EFL learning (enhancing their belief in their learning capabilities). *Third*, transmitting cultural values and expectations to their children and shaping their positive attitudes towards EFL learning. *Fourth*, fostering cognitive development and learning environment through engaging activities, exposure to diverse resources, and supportive interactions. *Fifth*, providing constant inspiration and aspiration as long-term educational outcomes to develop a lifelong interest in EFL learning.

This study discovered that the goals of students with low individual interests usually revolved around good grades and task completion (e.g. Hana). In contrast, the purposes of students with high individual interests go beyond school contexts (i.e. Zidan, Ario). Pedagogically, teachers can use this fact to promote students' individual interests by encouraging them to explore their interests associated with their inspirations and future aspirations. The study also highlighted that individual interest promotes productive/meaningful engagement. Thus, it is necessary to support students in having more connections with their learning, enable them to experience the practical use and values of learning English and help them discover personal values and goals. It is also necessary to position the children as the main actors by providing opportunities to exercise their individual interests through various learning activities and school programs.

EFL cases reported here also provide compelling evidence of how parental involvement influences children's attitudes, motivation, and proficiency in English language learning. This case underscores the significance of collaborative efforts between parents, educators, and communities in nurturing the next generation of proficient English speakers.

The student participants here are good achievers from families with sound financial and educational backgrounds. Further studies could examine students with various grade achievements and academically struggling students to understand the complexity of parental involvement and children's interest development. Students who lack economic and educational support at home would be promising to be further investigated. Gender will also be an interesting factor to be studied further in relation to the nature of children in learning. Gender might influence children's learning development differently, affecting their interest growth.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a part of the first author's doctoral study which was funded by Indonesian Endowment for Education (LPDP scholarship), Indonesian Ministry of Finance.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Naning Tri Wahyuni  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5725-9908>

Tan Bee Tin  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4751-9347>

References

- Ainley, M. 2008. "Interest: A Significant Thread Binding Cognition and Affect in the Regulation of Learning." *International Journal of Psychology* 43 (3–4): 17–18.
- Asgari, M., S. Ketabi, and Z. Amirian. 2019. "Interest-based Language Teaching: Enhancing Students' Interest and Achievement in L2 Reading." *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* 7 (1): 61–75.

- Bai, B., Y. Nie, and A. N. Lee. 2022. "Academic Self-Efficacy, Task Importance, and Interest: Relations with English Language Learning in an Asian Context." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 43 (5): 438–451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1746317>.
- Bandura, A. 1977. *Social Learning Theory*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Baumrind, D. 1971. "Current Patterns of Parental Authority." *Developmental Psychology Monograph* 4: 1–103. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030372>.
- Baumrind, D. 2013. "Authoritative Parenting Revisited: History and Status." In *Authoritative Parenting: Synthesizing Nurture and Discipline for Optimal Child Development*, edited by R. E. Larzelere, A. S. Morris, and A. W. Harrist, 11–34. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13948-002>.
- Bonci, A., E. Mottram, E. McCoy, and J. Cole. 2011. *A Research Review: The Importance of Families and the Home Environment*. London: National Literacy Trust.
- Boonk, L., H. J. M. Gijsselaers, H. Ritzen, and S. Brand-Gruwel. 2018. "A Review of the Relationship Between Parental Involvement Indicators and Academic Achievement." *Educational Research Review*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.02.001>.
- Cancino, M. 2021. "Incidental Vocabulary Learning and Retention of EFL Learners: To What Extent is Topic Interest a Factor?" *Revista Española De Lingüística Aplicada/Spanish. Journal of Applied Linguistics* 34 (1): 31–52. <https://doi.org/10.1075/resla.19049.can>.
- Desforges, C., and A. Abouchar. 2003. "The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A Literature Review." Research Report, 443. London: Department for Education and Skills.
- Detweiler, M. F., J. S. Comer, and A. M. Albano. 2010. "Social Anxiety in Children and Adolescents: Biological, Developmental, and Social Considerations." In *Clinical, Developmental, and Social Perspectives*, 2nd ed., edited by S. G. Hofmann P.M.Dibartolo, 223–270. Elsevier Academic Press.
- García, F., and E. Gracia. 2014. "The Indulgent Parenting Style and Developmental Outcomes in South European and Latin American Countries." *Parenting Across Cultures*, 419–433. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7503-9_31.
- García, F., and E. Gracia. 2009. "Is Always Authoritative the Optimum Parenting Style? Evidence from Spanish Families." *Adolescence* 44 (173). Spring 2009 Libra Publishers, Inc., 3089C Clairemont Dr., PMB 383, San Diego, CA 92117.
- Graf, M. 2011. *Including and Supporting Learners of English as an Additional Language*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Gunderson, E. A., M. B. Donnellan, R. W. Robins, and K. H. Trzesniewski. 2018. "The Specificity of Parenting Effects: Differential Relations of Parent Praise and Criticism to Children's Theories of Intelligence and Learning Goals." *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 173: 116–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2018.03.015>.
- Han, Z. 2021. "Exploring the Conceptual Constructs of Learners' Goal Commitment, Grit, and Self-Efficacy." *Frontiers in Psychology* 12: 783400. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.783400>.
- Harackiewicz, J. M., A. M. Durik, K. E. Barron, L. Linnenbrink-Garcia, and J. M. Tauer. 2008. "The Role of Achievement Goals in the Development of Interest: Reciprocal Relations Between Achievement Goals, Interest, and Performance." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 100 (1): 105–122. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.100.1.105>.
- Harackiewicz, J. M., and C. S. Hulleman. 2010. "The Importance of Interest: The Role of Achievement Goals and Task Values in Promoting Interest Development." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 4 (1): 42–52. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2009.00207.x>.
- Harackiewicz, J. M., J. L. Smith, and S. J. Priniski. 2016. "Interest Matters: The Importance of Promoting Interest in Education." *Policy Insights from the Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 3 (2): 220–227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732216655542>.
- Harris, A., and J. Goodall. 2007. *Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement: Do Parents Know They Matter?* London: DCSF.
- Hayek, J., F. Schneider, N. Lahoud, M. Tueni, and H. De vries. 2022. "Authoritative Parenting Stimulates Academic Achievement, Also Partly via Self-Efficacy and Intention Towards Getting Good Grades." *Open Access Plos Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0265595>.
- Henderson, J., and M. R. Lepper. 2002. "The Effects of Praise on Children's Intrinsic Motivation: A Review and Synthesis." *Psychological Bulletin* 128 (5): 774–795. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.5.774>.
- Hernández-Alava, M., and G. Popli. 2017. "Children's Development and Parental Input: Evidence from the UK Millennium Cohort Study." *Demography* 54 (2): 485–511. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-017-0554-6>.
- Hulleman, C. S., A. M. Durik, S. A. Schweigert, and J. M. Harackiewicz. 2008. "Task Values, Achievement Goals, and Interest: An Integrative Analysis." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 100 (2): 398–416. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.100.2.398>.
- Karibayeva, A., and Y. Boğar. 2014. "To What Extent Does Parents' Involvement in Middle School Influence Children's Educational Progress?" *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 152: 529–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.09.222>.
- Köller, O., J. Baumert, and K. Schnabel. 2001. "Does Interest Matter? The Relationship Between Academic Interest and Achievement in Mathematics." *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* 32 (5): 448–470. <https://doi.org/10.2307/749801>.
- Krapp, A., S. Hidi, and K. A. Renninger. 2014. "Interest, Learning, and Development." In *The Role of Interest in Learning and Development*, edited by K. A. Renninger, S. Hidi, and A. Krapp, 3–25. New York, NY: Psychology Press.







- Krisbergh, A. 2022. *Being A Role Model: The Promise and The Peril*. The Centre for Parenting Education. Accessed March 25, 2024. <https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/focus-parents/role-model-promise-peril/>.
- Lee, S., and D. Pulido. 2017. "The Impact of Topic Interest, L2 Proficiency, and Gender on EFL Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition Through Reading." *Language Teaching Research* 21 (1): 118–135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168816637381>.
- Lequía, J. 2011. "Motivation, Interest, and Attention: Re-Defining Learning in the Autism Spectrum." *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 58 (4): 405–408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2011.626671>.
- Lightbrown, P. M., and N. Spada. 2013. *How Languages Are Learned*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Loughlin-Presnal, J., and K. L. Bierman. 2017. "How do Parent Expectations Promote Child Academic Achievement in Early Elementary School? A Test of Three Mediators." *Developmental Psychology* 53 (9): 1694–1708. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000369>.
- Malik, H., M. A. Humaira, A. N. Komari, I. Fathurrochman, and I. Jayanto. 2021. "Identification of Barriers and Challenges to Teaching English at an Early Age in Indonesia: An International Publication Analysis Study." *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5 (1): 217–229. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5n1.1485>.
- Martinez-Pons, M. 2002. "Parental Influences on Children's Academic Self-Regulatory Development." *Theory Into Practice* 41 (2): 126–131. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_9.
- Pinquart, M., and M. Ebeling. 2019. "Parental Educational Expectations and Academic Achievement in Children and Adolescents - A meta-analysis." *Educational Psychology Review* 32: 463–480. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09506-z>.
- Pinter, A. 2011. *Children Learning Second Languages*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pinter, A. 2017. *Teaching Young Language Learners*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Reeve, J., W. Lee, and S. Won. 2015. "Interest as Emotion, Affect, and Schema." In *Interest in Mathematics and Science Learning*, edited by K. A. Renninger, M. Nieswandt, and S. Hidi, 79–92. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Renninger, K. A., and S. Hidi. 2016. *The Power of Interest for Motivation and Engagement*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Renninger, K. A., and S. Hidi. 2016. *The Power of Interest for Motivation and Engagement* (First Edit). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Renninger, K. A., and S. Hidi. 2022. "Interest: A Unique Affective and Cognitive Motivational Variable That Develops." *Advance Motivation Science* 9: 179–239. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.adms.2021.12.004>.
- Rotgans, J. I. 2015. "Validation Study of a General Subject-Matter Interest Measure: The Individual Interest Questionnaire (IIQ)." *Health Professions Education* 1 (1): 67–75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hpe.2015.11.009>.
- Rotgans, J. I., and H. G. Schmidt. 2018. "How Individual Interest Influences Situational Interest and How Both are Related to Knowledge Acquisition: A Microanalytical Investigation." *The Journal of Educational Research* 111 (5): 530–540. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2017.1310710>.
- Roure, C., and V. Lentillon-Kaestner. 2021. "Relationships Between Students' Individual Interest, Achievement Goals, Perceived Competence, and Situational Interest: A Cluster Analysis in Swimming." *European Physical Education Review* 28 (2): 322–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X211045992>.
- Rowley, S. J., and J. E. Schulenberg. 2007. "Predictors of Parent Involvement Across Contexts in Asian American and European American Families." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 38: 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.38.1.1>.
- Sanders, M. G., and S. B. Sheldon. 2009. *Principals Matter: A Guide to School, Family, and Community Partnerships*. Corwin: A SAGE Company.
- Sorić, I., and M. Palekčić. 2009. "The Role of Students' Interests in Self-Regulated Learning: The Relationship Between Students' Interests, Learning Strategies and Causal Attributions." *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 24 (4): 545–565. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03178767>.
- Susanty, L., H. I. Sholihah, I. S. Pramesworo, S. Telaumbanua, and A. Basir. 2021. "Promoting English Learning from Home to Indonesian Families: An Alternative Approach to Learning Foreign Languages at an Early Age." *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5 (1): 203–216. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5n1.1310>.
- Tin, T. B. 2013. "Exploring the Development of 'Interest' in Learning English as a Foreign/Second Language." *RELC Journal* 44 (2): 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688213488388>.
- Tin, T. B. 2016. *Stimulating Student Interest in Language Learning: Theory, Research and Practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wahyuni, N. T. 2022. "Investigating Primary School Students' Development of Interest in English Language Learning: Classroom-Related and Parental Involvement." A PhD thesis. The University of Auckland, New Zealand. <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/61839>.
- Walker, J. W. T., A. S. Wilkins, J. R. Dallaire, H. M. Sandler, and K. V. Hoover-Dempsey. 2005. "Parental Involvement: Model Revision Through Scale Development." *The Elementary School Journal* 106 (2): 85104.
- Wang, R., M. E. Shirvan, and T. Taherian. 2021. "Perseverance of Effort and Consistency of Interest: A Longitudinal Perspective." *Frontiers in Psychology* 12: 743414. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.743414>.
- Yin, Robert K. 2018. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Situational Interest Questionnaire (SIQ)

Please indicate (✓), on a scale from 1 to 6, how true the statements are for you right now!







Scales: not true at all (1), not true for me (2), neutral (3), true for me (4), very true for me (5), very-very true for me (6)

No.	Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6
							
1.	I think my English lesson today is interesting						
2.	The topic is interesting						
3.	The learning activities are also interesting						
4.	I enjoy working on my English lesson today						
5.	I want to learn more about today's lesson						
6.	I am fully focused (concentrated) on my English lesson today						
7.	I want to master today's lesson well						
8.	I felt bored during my English lesson today						
9.	I think I learn a lot from my English lesson today						
10.	I think my English lesson today help me improve my English skill and mastery						

Appendix 2. Individual Interest Questionnaire (IIQ)

Please indicate (✓), on a scale from 1 to 6, how true the statements are for you right now!

Scales: not true at all (1), not true for me (2), neutral (3), true for me (4), very true for me (5), very-very true for me (6)

No.	Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6
							
1.	I am very interested in learning English						
2.	I have been interested in learning English since I was a little						
3.	I always look forward to my English lessons because I enjoy them a lot						
4.	I often read English books						
5.	I often watch English TV programs and movies						
6.	I often play various games in English						
7.	I often listen to music and English songs						
8.	One day, I want to visit English speaking countries (e.g. America, Canada, Australia, Britain, etc.)						
9.	When I am big, I want to study in English speaking countries (e.g. America, the UK, Australia, etc.)						
10.	When I am an adult, I want to do a job where I need to use English (e.g. tourist guide, teaching English, astronaut, overseas job, etc.).						