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Influence of Parents' English Mastery on Children's Screen Time for English Learning

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the influence of parents' English mastery on children's screen time for learning English, considering the mediating role of parental involvement. A quantitative correlational design was used in this study with 38 participants consisting of parents of students at Al Madina Islamic Kindergarten in Semarang. Data were collected through a questionnaire via Google form and analyzed using Spearman's correlation. The results showed a significance value of p = 0.059 for the correlation between parents' English proficiency and screen time frequency, and a significance value of p = 0.009 for the correlation between parents' English proficiency and parental involvement. This indicates that parents' English proficiency is not significantly related to children's screen time frequency but is significantly correlated with parental involvement. This study emphasizes the importance of empowering parents not only with language skills but also with active involvement strategies.

Keywords: *Parent's English Mastery, Screen Time, Parental Involvement*
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INTRODUCTION

At the present time, where technology is inseparable from life, the integration of screen-based activities into children's daily routines has become commonplace. The widespread use of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and televisions is essential necessity, particularly among young children (Nathan et al., 2022). According to Ul Munafiah & Latif (2022), all parents surveyed in their study allowed their children to engage with digital media through various devices. This permission is often granted with diverse intentions, including entertainment, behavioral rewards, and educational purposes.

Among these objectives, the educational use of screen time has drawn particular attention, particularly in the relation to the language development for early childhood. Language learning is highly recommended from an early age, because it is a golden age for children to learn languages when brain development reaches its peak (Hardiany & Haryani, 2021). At this stage, children are more receptive to linguistic input and can absorb new languages more naturally and effectively. In this context, digital devices are frequently utilized to access interactive content such as educational videos, language learning applications, and games that aim to support second or foreign language acquisition, including English. Screen time is increasingly seen as a pedagogical tool that can enhance children's exposure to the English language. However, the extent to which these digital tools are effective in promoting language acquisition is significantly influenced by several factors, one of the most critical is parental involvement (Putri & Saharudin, 2025).

Numerous studies have highlighted the significance of active parental involvement in children's language learning. Structured guidance and direct support from parents have been shown to substantially enhance children's language outcomes (Pradita et al., 2024). Parents

serve as essential facilitators, creating the linguistic environment and scaffolding necessary to support their children's progress. For early childhood education, the role of parents in foreign language (FL) learning has been recognized as not only supportive but essential (Korosidou et al., 2020). Moreover, the quality of interaction between parents and children during screen time significantly impacts the effectiveness of digital learning.

This notion is reinforced by Vygotsky (1980) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which posits that children learning activities will reach the best when guided by more knowledgeable adults who help them move beyond their current capabilities. In the context of language learning through digital media, parental scaffolding becomes even more valuable. Parents with a higher level of English mastery are better equipped to guide their children effectively—they can model language use, explain complex concepts, translate where necessary, and provide meaningful feedback. Conversely, parents with limited English mastery may struggle to support their children adequately, potentially leading to a reduced use of digital media for educational purposes (Murshidi et al., 2023). Such limitations could restrict the child's ability to benefit fully from screen-based educational resources.

As Neumann (2020) asserts, digital learning tools are most effective when embedded in linguistically rich environments and supplemented with adult interaction. Therefore, the value of screen time is not determined solely by the content itself, but also by the context in which it is used—specifically, the involvement of parents in facilitating learning. The role of parents extends beyond passive supervision to include strategies, monitoring, and active participation in guiding their children's digital behaviors and educational experiences (Purnama et al., 2022). Furthermore, not all screen time is equal in its impact. The type of content children are exposed to, along with the level of interactivity and age-appropriateness, plays a critical role in determining its educational value. Interactive and well-designed educational media can positively influence language development, but the benefits are significantly amplified when parents are actively engaged in the learning process (Haura & Pranoto, 2022).Without such involvement, screen time may devolve into passive consumption that does little to support, and may even hinder, language acquisition.

Based on previous studies regarding screen time and parental involvement, there remains a notable gap in the literature about the specific influence of parents' English language mastery on how screen time is utilized for English learning. Most studies tend to discuss parental involvement without dissecting how linguistic capability shapes educational engagement with digital tools. With this gap in mind, the present study seeks to explore whether parents' mastery in English influences their children's use of screen time and its involvement for the purpose of English language learning. By examining the intersection between parental language skills, engagement practices, and the use of digital media, this research aims to provide deeper insights into how families can more effectively support children's language development in the digital era. In particular, this study focused on early childhood settings, where parental involvement remains a foundational pillar of effective language learning.

METHOD

The participants in this research were parents from Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia, specifically those whose children were enrolled at Islamic Kindergarten Al Madina Semarang, an educational institution that incorporates English into its curriculum. Participants were parents of children aged between 3 and 7 years old—a critical period for language development—who were actively involved in English language learning through the use of digital devices. There were 38 participants comprising both mothers or fathers was selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that participants met specific criteria, including variation in English language mastery and children's screen use for educational purposes. Parents from this institution likely had greater exposure to English learning resources and more opportunities to engage with their children's digital language activities. By including

parents with varying English skills—from basic to master—the study could examine how different levels of parental language ability influenced children's screen-based learning behaviors.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire created using Google Forms. The instrument consisted of three main sections. The first section used the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q) adapted from Marian et al. (2007), which measured the parents' self-reported English mastery across four language domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Responses were rated on an ordinal scale and used to generate an overall mastery score. The second section consisted of a Children's Screen Time Questionnaire, which gathered information about the duration and frequency of screen time related to English learning. This included digital activities such as watching English videos, using language learning apps, and playing interactive games. The third section, the Parental Involvement Questionnaire, assessed the extent of parental mediation during screen time. It covered aspects such as co-viewing, explaining content, and setting usage rules, in order to understand how parents support or facilitate digital learning at home.

Data analysis was conducted using statistical software such as SPSS. The first step involved conducting descriptive statistical analysis to summarize the participants' English mastery levels, children's screen time frequency, and the level of parental involvement. This included calculating the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of responses. Next, a normality test was performed using Shapiro-Wilk test to specify whether the data was distributed normally or not. Consider to the results of the normality test, a Spearman Rank Correlation was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. For statistical analysis, the significance level was established at $p < 0.05$, and any correlation with a p-value below this threshold would be considered statistically significant.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics on parents' English mastery, use of screen time for English learning, and levels of parental involvement are described in the following section.

A total of 38 parents of students at Islamic Kindergarten Al Madina Semarang filled out a questionnaire about their English mastery. The results of the analysis are displayed in the table below:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mastery_level	38	1.00	3.00	1.4737	.55687
Valid N (listwise)	38				

Figure 1. Descriptive Statistic Of Mastery Level

Based on result of the analysis, the English mastery level of parents showed an average (mean) value of 1.47, indicating that most parents were in the low (basic) category. The standard deviation of 0.55 shows moderate variation in the English mastery levels of the respondents. This reflects the diversity of English mastery levels among parents of Islamic Kindergarten Al Madina Semarang.

Meanwhile, children's screen time for English learning purposes was also analyzed based on two indicators: daily duration and weekly frequency. The results are presented below:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Durasi_harian	38	1.00	4.00	2.1842	.98242
Frekuensi_mingguan	38	1.00	4.00	2.2632	.86005
Valid N (listwise)	38				

Table 2. Descriptive statistic of Screen time Frequency

For daily duration, children spend an average of 15-30 minutes per day, with an average score of 2.18 on a scale of 1–4. Meanwhile, for weekly frequency, the average child accesses English-language content about 1-2 times a week, with an average score of 2.26. Both findings indicate that the use of digital devices for English language learning is quite intensive among young children. This supports the statement by Nurselvi Fajria et al. (2025) that children's use of digital media is high and increasing every year.

The level of parental involvement was also examined based on questions regarding how often parents accompanied their children during screen time, explained the meaning of new words from the content being watched, set rules and determined screen time limits, monitored the content consumed by their children, and discussed the content of English language screen time with their children. Descriptive statistics are presented in the following table:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental_involvement	38	1.29	5.00	3.8233	.95770
Valid N (listwise)	38				

Table 3. Descriptive statistic of Parental Involvement

The table above reveals the results of descriptive statistical analysis of parental involvement in children's screen time, with scores ranging from 1.29 to 5.00. The mean score for parental involvement was 3.82, which means that, in general, parents are quite involved in their children's screen time for English language learning. Meanwhile, the standard deviation of 0.96 indicates moderate variation in the level of involvement among respondents. This suggests that while most parents are fairly active in mediating their children's screen time, there are differences in the practices of parental involvement among individuals. The high level of parental involvement supports the findings of Korosidou et al. (2020) that parental involvement is important in children's foreign language learning, including language learning through screen time.

Next, a normality test was conducted to determine whether the data from the three variables, namely Parents' English Mastery, Screen Time, and Parental Involvement, were normally distributed. This test used the Shapiro-Wilk method because the amount of data was <50 (Mishra et al., 2019). The table is presented as follows:

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Parents_English_Mastery	.157	38	.020	.928	38	.017
screentime	.215	38	.000	.918	38	.009
Parental_involvement	.172	38	.006	.924	38	.013

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4. Tests of Normality

Based on the Shapiro-Wilk test results, the significance values for the variables Parents' English Mastery, frequency of screen time, and parental involvement are 0.017, 0.009, and 0.013, which are below the threshold α = 0.05. This indicates that the data for these variables can be considered non-normally distributed. Based on these results, since the three variables are not normally distributed, the analysis of the relationship between variables will use a non-parametric test, namely the Spearman Rank Correlation. The following are the results of the analysis:

Correlations

			Parents_English_Mastery	screentime
Spearman's rho	Parents_English_Mastery	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.309
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.059
		N	38	38
	screentime	Correlation Coefficient	.309	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.059	.
		N	38	38

Table 5. Correlation between Parents English Mastery and Screen time Frequency

Based on the results of the Spearman correlation test, a correlation value of r = 0.309 with a significance value of p = 0.059 (> 0.05) was obtained. These results indicate that there is a positive but weak and statistically insignificant relationship between parents' English mastery and children's screen time for learning English. In other words, although there is a tendency for children to use screen time more for English learning when their parents are more proficient in English, these results suggest this relationship is not strong enough to be statistically significant. Thus, parents' English mastery cannot be said to have a significant effect on children's screen time in the context of English language learning. These results are in line with Asmawati (2021) which state that parents' role in the usage of digital media by children is more influenced by the level of awareness and family educational values than by language mastery itself. Rawanita & Mardhiah (2024) also stated that the main strategy for managing children's gadget use is supported by digital awareness and parenting, not just language skills.

Although parents' English mastery does not directly have a significant influence on the frequency of children's screen time, it does influence the intensity of their involvement in mediating children's screen time activities. The results are as follows:

Correlations

			Parents_English_Mastery	Parental_involvement
Spearman's rho	Parents_English_Mastery	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.416**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.009
		N	38	38
	Parental_involvement	Correlation Coefficient	.416**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.
		N	38	38

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6. Correlation between Parents Englis Mastery and Parental Involvement

The Spearman correlation test obtained a correlation coefficient value of 0.416 with a significance value of p = 0.009, which is below the normal threshold (p < 0.01). This indicates a significant positive relationship between parents' English mastery and the level of parental involvement when accompanying children during screen time. This means, the higher the parents' English mastery, the higher their involvement in accompanying children when using screens for English learning. This may represent the findings of Murshidi et al. (2023) that parents with limited English proficiency may struggle to adequately support their children, potentially leading to reduced use of digital media for educational purposes. These results highlight the importance of parents or adults as educators for children. The better the parents' language skills, the more involved they are in maximizing their children's English language learning through screen time.

The study also delves deeper into the forms of parental involvement in children's screen time for English language learning. The questionnaire results showed the highest average scores in setting time limits (4.2), explaining the meaning of new English words (4.1), participating in reading, watching, or singing together (3.8), and providing appropriate content (3.5). These findings support the results of Karani et al. (2022) research, which emphasizes that limiting children's screen time can reduce the negative effects that may arise

from the use of digital media for language learning. Additionally, acting as a facilitator, such as explaining the meaning of new English words, is also recommended, as per the findings of Ponti (2023), who state that screen time can help children gain new vocabulary with the assistance of adult guidance (parents). Furthermore, selecting high-quality content will support the effectiveness of screen time, as explained by Oranga et al. (2023), that parents' involvement in providing a conducive learning environment and adequate resources can increase children's motivation and interest in learning.

These research findings reinforce the statement from the study by Livingstone & Blum-Ross (2020), which emphasizes that although parents' digital and language competencies are important, active involvement in guiding and directing children while using digital media has a greater influence on children's learning outcomes. Thus, parents' English mastery needs to be accompanied by active involvement or mediation to have a significant impact on children's learning experiences through screen time. This aligns with Neumann (2020) that digital learning tools are more effective when placed in a language-rich environment and supported by adult interaction.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that parents' English mastery may not directly influence the frequency of their children's screen time, but it contributes significantly to the quality of screen time through mediation strategies and their quantity of involvement with their children's learning process. This means that the role of parents as language companions and facilitators is key to enhancing the educational value of children's screen time.

CONCLUSIONS

This study found that parents' English mastery did not significantly predict children's screen time use for learning English, but it was significantly associated with their involvement in guiding such use. The findings emphasized the value of parental language competence coupled with intentional mediation strategies, such as discussing, explaining, guiding, and participating together in language learning through screen time. These findings have practical implications, particularly for early childhood education programs and parenting interventions. Family-based approaches can serve as supportive factors for children's language development through the growing use of digital learning. Future research is encouraged to further explore this mediation model and consider other influential variables such as children's motivation, digital literacy, parental educational background, and parenting styles, which may also shape children's screen time behavior and learning outcomes.

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