



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
MODERN EDUCATION
(IJMOE)
www.ijmoe.com



A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON PRACTICES AND ROLES OF PARENTAL SUPPORT IN FOSTERING LEARNER AUTONOMY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSROOMS

Punnithann Subramaniam¹, Amelia Abdullah^{2*}

¹ School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
Email: punnithann@student.usm.my

² School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
Email: amelia@usm.my

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 22.04.2025

Revised date: 15.05.2025

Accepted date: 04.06.2025

Published date: 23.06.2025

To cite this document:

Subramaniam, P., & Abdullah, A. (2025). A Systematic Literature Review On Practices And Roles Of Parental Support In Fostering Learner Autonomy In Primary School English Classrooms. *International Journal of Modern Education*, 7 (25), 735-754.

DOI: 10.35631/IJMOE.725049

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



Abstract:

Teachers focus on learner autonomy because it is important, especially in primary English classrooms. While many educators discuss the skills they use, how parents can help students gain autonomy is not often talked about. This systematic literature review (SLR) aims to bring together empirical results on how parents help their children develop autonomy in learning English at primary school. In line with PRISMA 2020, studies published as empirical research in Google Scholar, ERIC and Scopus databases during the years 2015 to 2025 were identified as well as reviewed. Using strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, the researcher chose 32 articles for review. Researcher pulled out the data and organized it using thematic synthesis, focusing on parental practices as well as roles to help children learn independently. Six core practices emerged: (1) homework supervision, (2) provision of learning resources, (3) encouragement, (4) language exposure, (5) creation of a language-rich home environment and (6) parent-teacher communication. As a result of these practices, children can handle their own learning activities and self-regulate while learning English. Five parental roles were discovered: motivator, co-learner, monitor, communicator and emotional supporter. All of these roles contribute to young students being motivated, persistent and reflective. It is clear from the findings that learner autonomy is built from the interactions between school and home environments. Parents should use autonomy-supportive approaches in both daily routines and their emotional interactions with children. The review points out that collaboration between schools and families helps build lifelong learning habits, especially where English is not the first language of children. Recommendations include fostering parental awareness and designing programs to align home support with classroom goals.

Keywords:

Learner Autonomy, Parental Support, Parents' Role, Parents' Practice, English Language Learning, Primary School English Learning

Introduction

Learner autonomy has long been recognized as a vital component of effective language learning, originating from Holec's (1981) foundational definition as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning." This concept has since evolved, with scholars like Benson (2011) and Little (1991) emphasizing autonomy as a dynamic process wherein learners actively engage in setting goals, selecting strategies and critically reflecting on their learning. Far from being limited to self-instruction, learner autonomy involves the cultivation of self-regulatory skills and the ability to navigate learning pathways independently, yet collaboratively, within supportive environments.

Benson (2011), highlighted that learner autonomy involves the acquisition of skills and dispositions that enable individuals to regulate their own learning processes by setting objectives, selecting learning methods, monitoring progress and reflecting on outcomes. Such capacities are not innate but are cultivated through guided learning experiences and scaffolded support. At primary school, autonomy grows as teachers and parents give students little by little more responsibility to manage their own actions as well as decisions (Guay et al., 2016).

Parental Support in Fostering Learner Autonomy

Many educators see building learner autonomy as a valuable goal that can be reached in the classroom. However, a lot of new research points out that parents also contribute equally to helping young children develop independent learning skills. Autonomy-supportive parenting is when parents give their children meaningful choices, consider what they think and encourage them to learn on their own (Andreadakis et al., 2018; Guay et al., 2016). Instead of telling children exactly what to do, these parents help their children by giving advice that encourages them to become more independent in their studies.

Research based on actual observations has found that different ways of parental involvement can help children learn on their own. When parents fill their homes with language and reading, speak English together as well as use different learning tools, their children can learn English on their own in everyday situations (Tao & Xu, 2022; Ho et al., 2023). Moreover, parental behaviour like encouraging their children, giving helpful comments and watching how they are doing help learners develop self-regulation, which is important for being independent (Erickson & Wharton-McDonald, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2021). Essentially, these types of support close the gap between what is learned in school and what happens at home, allowing students to continue practicing independent learning.

Even though parental support for learner autonomy matters a lot, it is still not widely studied in educational reviews, mainly in primary school English language education. While teachers are often seen as the primary agents of fostering autonomy, the foundational influence of parents in shaping children's attitudes, motivation and self-management skills is undeniable (Butler, 2015; Kalaycı & Öz, 2018). Therefore, understanding how parents contribute to

autonomy development through their daily practices and roles is essential for designing effective home-school collaboration strategies.

Recent global research has extended our understanding of how parental support intersects with digital innovation to foster learner autonomy, particularly in English language acquisition. Papadakis et al. (2023) observed that Western parents, particularly in Europe and the US, are increasingly leveraging cloud-based and augmented reality technologies to enhance children's engagement and self-directed learning, creating new forms of educational scaffolding at home. These tools are not only supplemental but play a transformative role in developing autonomy through simulation-based tasks and open learning platforms. Similarly, Vaiopoulou et al. (2021) emphasized that the use of educational apps by parents in kindergartens significantly impacts early literacy and autonomy development, especially when parents perceive such tools as effective and developmentally appropriate.

Moreover, the large-scale review by Papadakis (2023) on MOOCs from 2012 to 2022 highlighted how open digital platforms are now reshaping the learning landscape even for younger users, especially when guided by parental involvement. The synergy between smart technologies and family engagement provides children with both choice and competence, key tenets of self-determination theory. These findings align with the argument that effective parental support must evolve alongside technological affordances and educational shifts, particularly in multicultural and digitally rich contexts.

Importance of Autonomy in Primary School English Learning in Malaysia

In Malaysia, English is designated as a second language and plays a vital role within the national education system. The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) aligned curriculum has significantly influenced the teaching and learning of English in primary schools (Ministry of Education, 2020). This framework emphasizes communicative competence, learner-centered approaches, and the development of independent learning skills from an early stage. However, despite policy initiatives aimed at enhancing English proficiency, challenges persist particularly in fostering learner autonomy among primary school students, who often rely heavily on teacher-led instruction and structured learning materials (Tao & Xu, 2022).

Giving learners independence in English from primary school helps them develop important self-management skills at an early stage. With autonomy, students can take charge of their education and build habits such as setting goals, checking their own progress as well as thinking carefully about their learning (Benson, 2011). Such skills are important for acquiring language and for supporting students in all areas of school life by encouraging them to solve problems on their own as well as stay eager to learn even after school (Guay et al., 2016).

Since English is not the main language in Malaysia, students need autonomy to supplement what they learn at school. Those who learn on their own tend to look for more chances to learn, practice by themselves and hang in there when things get tough, all of which are necessary for becoming fluent (Tao & Xu, 2022). This is necessary when teacher guidance does not fully meet all the diverse needs of students (Feng et al., 2019).

Besides, encouraging autonomy in primary education helps students face the expectations of college and work, where managing one's own learning is important. When students start to develop their autonomy, they learn to take charge of their learning, depend less on others and feel more motivated (Andreadakis et al., 2018). Therefore, motivating learners to take charge of their own learning fits in with both local education aims and the abilities needed by 21st-century learners across the world.

Justification for this Systematic Review

Although learner autonomy has been widely explored in language education research, most studies primarily focus on the role of teachers and institutional strategies. Parental support, despite being a significant influence in children's learning remains underrepresented in systematic reviews, particularly concerning its specific impact on fostering autonomy in primary school English classrooms (Butler, 2015; Sigit & Anam, 2024; Tao & Xu, 2022; Neubauer et al., 2021). This gap limits a comprehensive understanding of how family environments contribute to the development of autonomous learning behaviours.

Furthermore, in the Malaysian context the unique challenges of second language acquisition, coupled with diverse parental backgrounds, demand a clearer understanding of how parents can effectively support autonomy development. The review works to close this gap by bringing together evidence on parental practices and roles. This review will provide advice for educators, parents and policymakers who want to promote autonomous learning among primary school English learners (Ho et al., 2023; Kalaycı & Öz, 2018).

Purpose of the Review

The primary purpose of this systematic literature review is to gather together the existing research on the connection between parental involvement and student autonomy in English classes at primary school. In particular, the review aims to find out the various methods parents use to help their children learn on their own and to examine the roles parents play in this process.

Therefore, the review provides a specific overview of parental support in the context of primary education to help close a gap in the current literature.

Research Objectives

This systematic literature review is guided by the following research objectives:

- i. To identify the parents' practices that support learner autonomy in primary school English classrooms.
- ii. To explore the roles of parents in fostering learner autonomy in primary school English classrooms.

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, this review addresses these research questions:

- i. What are the parents' practices that support learner autonomy in primary school English classrooms?
- ii. What are the roles of parents in fostering learner autonomy in primary school English classrooms?

Background of the Study

Parental practices play a big role in teaching children good learning habits by encouraging them to be independent early on. Evidence suggests that supporting learners at home by giving them different activities, helping with homework and encouraging efforts to learn on their own helps develop their autonomy (Feng et al., 2019; Tao & Xu, 2022). Engaging in this way, parents help children become motivated and able to control their own learning (Guay et al., 2016). Additionally, autonomy-supportive behaviours like giving meaningful options and being respectful of the child's thoughts help the child adopt their learning goals (Andreadakis et al., 2018).

Besides particular teaching methods, parents play different roles that help students become more independent learners. As motivators, parents inspire their children's desire to learn more by praising them, setting goals and noticing their efforts (Clark & Ladd, 2000; Butler, 2015). Studies have shown that when parents use empathy and do not control their children, it boosts their children's motivation as well as their ability to persevere (Neubauer et al., 2021). English language learners need such motivational roles to stay interested in the subject outside the classroom.

Co-learning is another important way where parents work together with their kids on learning activities. Having a teacher in this role makes the learning environment cooperative, allowing children to learn from one another and learn best practices (Hurtado & Castañeda-Peña, 2016; Erickson & Wharton-McDonald, 2018). Some studies show that taking part in activities such as reading texts and speaking allows children to practice on their own, with the support of others nearby (Ciriza, 2018; Gao, 2006). A monitor is also responsible for tracking the child's learning, checking that tasks are finished and helping the child learn to self-regulate without being too controlling (Vanderfaellie et al., 2020).

Research Design

The researcher created a protocol for a systematic review to study how parents help students become more independent in the primary school English classroom. It was decided to use this method because it is better at combining the existing research and is more accurate (Van Laar, Van Deursen, Van Dijk & De Haan, 2017).

The review follows the guidelines outlined in PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA guarantees clear and complete information about the review process which makes the findings more reproducible as well as reliable.

Search Strategy

To help find all the important studies, the researcher searched three academic databases: Google Scholar, ERIC and Scopus. These databases were chosen because they cover a wide range of educational and social science literature, just as the recommendations for conducting top-quality systematic reviews in education research advise (Booth et al., 2021).

The researcher starts by choosing a specific year for the articles' publication. Only studies released between 2015 and 2025 were used since the world of education is constantly changing, as well as home-school collaboration in language learning is gaining importance.

Second, the researcher used the search strategy combined with a set of keywords and Boolean operators to capture studies related to learner autonomy as well as parental support. Keywords used included “learner autonomy,” “autonomous learning,” “parental roles,” “parental practices,” “parental support,” “primary school,” “elementary school,” “English language learning,” and “EFL.” Boolean operators (AND, OR) were applied to refine the search. For example, (“learner autonomy” OR “autonomous learning”) AND (“parental roles” OR “parental practices”) AND (“primary school” OR “elementary school”) AND (“English language learning” OR “EFL”). This approach followed best practices outlined by the Cochrane Handbook for systematic searches (Higgins et al., 2024).

Third, the researcher also carried out both backwards and forward snowballing. As a result, the search will be more accurate and less likely to show selection bias, as reference lists from main articles were also checked manually (Booth et al., 2021).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Setting specific criteria for what to include and what to exclude in a systematic literature review is necessary to keep only relevant as well as good-quality studies, according to Gough et al. (2017). In order to support the objectives, the researcher created the criteria for the review, which centered on parental help in encouraging independence in primary school English classrooms. In the beginning, only English language research was considered to keep things consistent and lessen the risk of translation errors. Thus, studies written in the Malay language were omitted due to language problems and not being easily accessible (Booth et al., 2021). Second, the researcher concentrated on peer-reviewed journal articles by omitting books, conference papers and reports, because these articles offer stricter as well as proven evidence (Higgins et al., 2024). Third, only online publications were considered so that screening and data collection were straightforward, overlooking articles found only in print or inaccessible formats. Fourth, the time limit for publication was set from 2015 to 2025 to ensure the research included was about current educational trends (Gough et al., 2017).

Fifth, there were no limits on the country where research was published as long as it dealt with learner autonomy in English classes in primary school. Still, articles not about primary education were not included, regardless of where they came from. Sixth, empirical studies such as qualitative and quantitative research, were focused on to fully understand how parental support works (Booth et al., 2021). Theoretical papers, conceptual discussions and opinion-based articles were excluded due to their lack of empirical evidence. Finally, the review specifically targeted studies involving primary school learners by excluding research focused on secondary, tertiary or adult learners, as parental influence is more significant in the early stages of education (Guay et al., 2016). Table 1 below shows the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of this Study

Types of criterions	Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	Malay language		/
	English language	/	
Type of publication	Journal articles	/	
	Books		/
	Conference papers		/
	Reports		/

Access	Online	/	
	Paper		/
Publication period	2015 - 2025	/	
Place of publication	Worldwide	/	
	Asia		/
	Africa		/
	North/ South America		/
	Europe		/
	Australia		/
Type of study	Empirical investigation	/	
	Theoretical studies		/
Research methods	Qualitative	/	
	Quantitative	/	
Level of learner autonomy	Primary school	/	
	Secondary school		/
	Tertiary level (Universities)		/

Screening and Selection Process

The screening and selection process for this review followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021). A total of 103 articles were identified through database searches (Google Scholar, ERIC and Scopus) and backward and forward snowballing techniques. After removing duplicates, 88 articles remained for screening. Titles and abstracts were reviewed, leading to the exclusion of 48 articles (conference papers, reports, books) that did not meet the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, 40 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, from which 8 articles were excluded for not aligning with the research objectives and questions. Finally, 32 articles were included in the final synthesis. Only studies that explicitly reported obtaining ethical approval or demonstrated adherence to ethical research practices, such as informed consent and participant confidentiality were included in this review to ensure ethical compliance. The entire selection process was documented using a PRISMA flowchart to ensure transparency and replicability. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA flow diagram for this study.

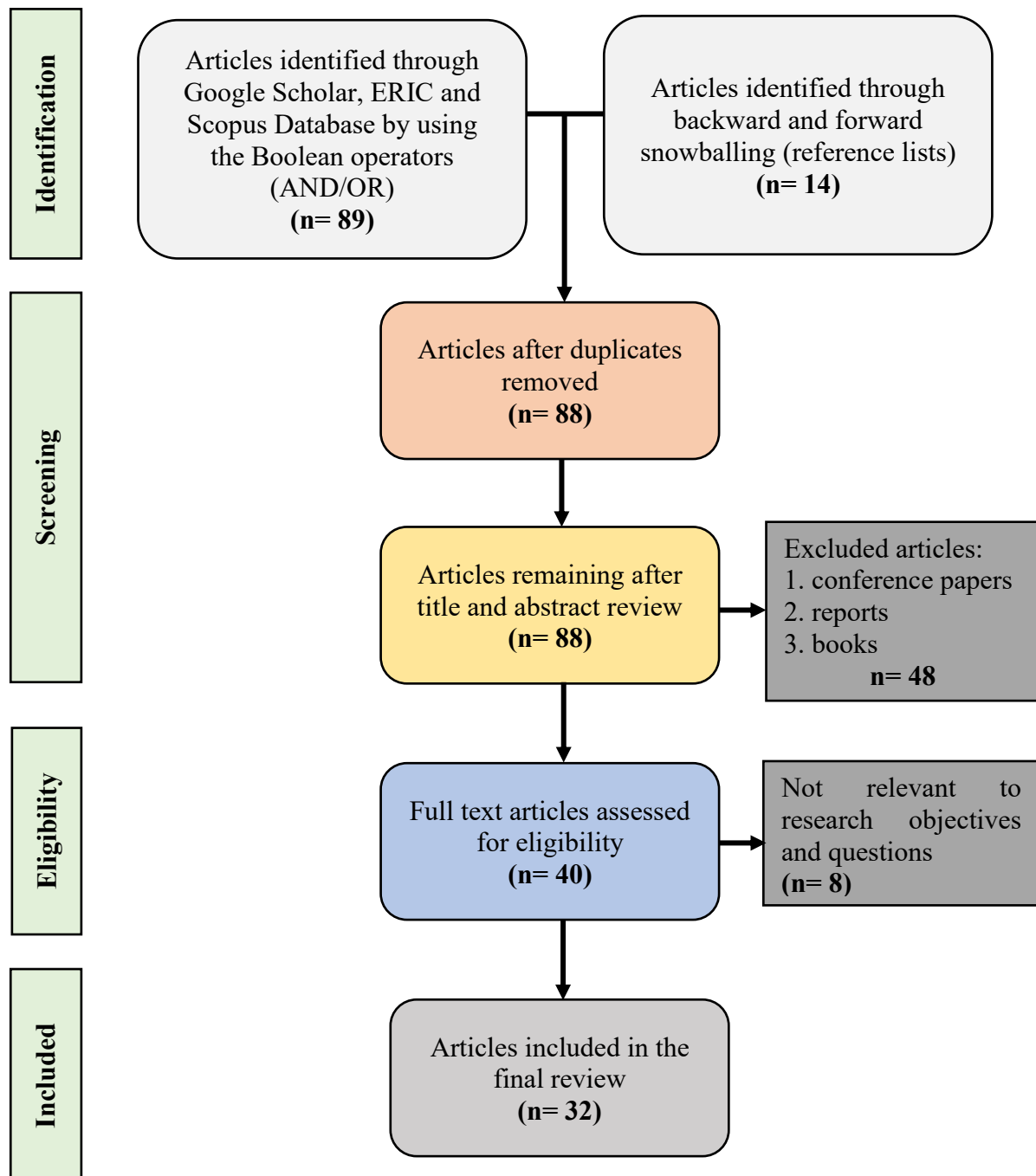


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram for Screening and Selection Process of this Study

Data Extraction

For each of the 32 included articles, key details were extracted, including themes, the author(s), year of publication, research context (country), study design (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), participants (primary school students and parents) and main findings related to parental support in fostering learner autonomy. The extraction specifically focused on identifying the practices parents employed (e.g., learning support strategies, resource provision, home learning activities) and the roles they played (e.g., motivator, co-learner,

monitor, emotional supporter). This structured approach allowed for clear identification of patterns across studies and provided the foundation for the subsequent thematic analysis.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The extracted data were analysed using a thematic synthesis approach to identify patterns, similarities and differences across the included studies. The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, data related to parental practices were coded and grouped into categories such as resource provision, homework supervision and home learning activities. Second, data about parental roles was grouped into functions named motivator, co-learner, monitor, communicator and emotional supporter.

Findings were reviewed and explained by highlighting the role these practices as well as roles, play in helping students take charge of their own learning in primary school English classes. To ensure all results were presented effectively and clearly, this method used the systematic techniques suggested by Thomas and Harden (2008) as well as Booth et al. (2021).

Findings

The findings are arranged based on the two main research objectives. The first task in our study is to learn about the methods parents use. Our second aim is to study the roles parents take on in helping their children become independent learners. To study the collected data, thematic synthesis was adopted to help bring out common themes and patterns.

Parents' Practices that Support Learner Autonomy in Primary School English Classrooms

One of the most common practices identified in the reviewed studies is homework supervision where parents guide or assist children in completing English language tasks. Feng et al. (2019), as well as Tao and Xu (2022), explained that when parents help supervise homework. It encourages students to manage their work and learn responsibility. Besides, learning resource provision is another frequent practice, where parents supply learning materials such as English workbooks, mobile apps and online resources to support language acquisition (Li, 1999; Zhang & Whitebread, 2019). These activities improve children's chances to learn and also help them use the language on their own outside of school (McCurdy et al., 2020).

Encouragement and positive reinforcement toward learners proved to be key for parents helping their children in English. Daniel et al. (2018) and Özçelik (2022) discovered that telling children, "Well done" or "Keep trying" encourages them to feel good about themselves as well as take on learning by themselves. Furthermore, parents are important in language exposure opportunities to learn English at home, like watching English cartoons, singing songs or reading stories (Guay et al., 2016; Newcombe, 2018). These activities help learners use language in real-life situations which makes them feel more confident to work on their own.

A number of studies suggest that language rich home environment gives learners more control over their learning (Andreadakis et al., 2018; Laurin & Joussemet, 2017). This includes using English in your everyday talks, sharing English media and making sure the environment supports students using the language by themselves. Parent-teacher communication helps ensure that what happens at home supports the child's progress at school. Lei and Mustapha (2024) as well as Sigit and Anam (2024), suggest that frequent communication between parents and teachers helps parents better understand what students need to learn so they can support students in making their own learning decisions. They prove the many steps parents take to

assist their children's self-directed learning in the primary school English environment. Table 2 below shows the 6 themes emerged after systematic review for research objective 1 which is to identify the parents' practices that support learner autonomy in primary school English classrooms.

Table 2: Emerged Themes for Parents' Practices That Support Learner Autonomy in Primary School English Classrooms (RO 1)

Theme	Author, Year, Country	Design	Data collection method	Respondents	Main Findings/Results
1. Homework Supervision	Tao & Xu (2022) China	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary students	Parental supervision of homework tasks supports children's development of self-regulatory skills.
	Feng et al. (2019) China	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents of primary students	Task supervision enhances learner responsibility.
	McCurdy et al. (2020) USA	Mixed Methods	Observations	Parents & students	Guided task management fosters autonomy skills.
2. Learning Resource Provision	Li (1999) China	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary students	Providing English resources encourages self-initiated learning.
	Zhang & Whitebread (2019) UK	Mixed Methods	Observations	Parents & students	Resource availability boosts independent learning.
	Costa et al. (2020) Portugal	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents & teachers	Access to learning materials supports autonomy development.
3. Encouragement	Daniel et al. (2018) USA	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents & children	Positive reinforcement enhances learner motivation.
	Özçelik (2022)	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary students	Parental praise builds learner confidence.

	Turkey				
	Erickson & Wharton-McDonald (2018)	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of English learners	Encouragement fosters persistence in self-learning.
	USA				
4. Language Exposure	Guay et al. (2016) Canada	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents of English learners	Daily English exposure activities promote autonomy.
	Newcombe (2018) UK	Qualitative	Observations	Parents & children	Informal language use enhances independent practice.
5. Language rich Home Environment	Laurin & Joussemet (2017) Canada	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary learners	English-rich home settings encourage self-directed learning.
	Andreadakis et al. (2018) Greece	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents & children	Home-based language environments support autonomous learning.
6. Parent-Teacher Communication	Lei & Mustapha (2024) Malaysia	Mixed Methods	Surveys and Interviews	Parents & teachers	Regular communication aligns home support with classroom goals.
	Sigit & Anam (2024) Indonesia	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary students	Collaborative dialogues with teachers reinforce learner autonomy.

Roles of Parents in Fostering Learner Autonomy in Primary School English Classrooms

One of the prominent roles of parents in fostering learner autonomy is **motivator**. Parents inspire and encourage their children to stay engaged in English language learning by praising effort, celebrating small achievements and setting learning goals together (Butler, 2015; Neubauer et al., 2021). Besides, the role of **co-learner** is evident when parents actively participate in learning activities with their children, such as reading English books together or engaging in language games (Hurtado & Castañeda-Peña, 2016; Ciriza, 2018). By acting as learning partners, parents not only model effective learning strategies but also create meaningful opportunities for children to practice autonomy in a supportive environment.

Another significant role is **monitor**, where parents supervise their child's study routines, track progress, and ensure task completion. This supervisory role, however, is autonomy-supportive rather than controlling, aiming to guide rather than dictate the learning process (Gao, 2006; Vanderfaillie et al., 2020). According to studies, if parents set up a monitoring system that matches the child's pace, it helps the child feel in charge of their learning (Clark & Ladd, 2000; Erickson & Wharton-McDonald, 2018). Besides, parents usually, as **communicators**, keep in touch with teachers to ensure home and school learning match. When parents and teachers communicate, parents can help students study what they are learning in class on their own (Ho et al., 2023; Kalaycı & Öz, 2018).

The role of an **emotional supporter** is also very important for helping learners feel confident and strong. Parents give emotional support most during times when their children struggle or feel unsure about using English (Distefano et al., 2021; Farida et al., 2024). Children become less anxious, are more motivated to learn and are encouraged to follow their own path in language learning thanks to emotional support. Bai and Gu (2022), along with Purwanto et al. (2023), argue that when parents show emotional support, students become more motivated as well as determined in their own learning. These roles demonstrate the multifaceted ways parents contribute to fostering learner autonomy in primary school English classrooms. Table 3 below shows the 5 themes emerged after systematic review for research objective 2 which is to explore the roles of parents in fostering learner autonomy in primary school English classrooms.

Table 3: Emerged Themes for Roles of Parents in Fostering Learner Autonomy in Primary School English Classrooms (RO 2)

Theme	Author, Year, Country	Design	Data collection method	Respondents	Main Findings/Results
1. Motivator	Butler (2015) China	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary students	Parents' encouragement boosts motivation for autonomous learning.
	Neubauer et al. (2021) USA	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents & children	Daily autonomy-supportive parenting enhances motivation and well-being.
	Purwanto et al. (2023) Indonesia	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary students	Parental support fosters learner engagement and self-efficacy.
2. Co-learner	Hurtado & Castañeda-Peña (2016) Colombia	Qualitative	Observations and Interviews	Parents & students	Parents as co-learners enrich EFL literacy learning through active participation.
	Ciriza (2018) Spain	Case Study	Interviews	Parents of primary learners	Collaborative learning with parents strengthens learner autonomy.
	Arraiza (2015) Finland	Qualitative	Document Analysis	Parents & teachers	Home rules and joint tasks support learner initiative.
3. Monitor	Gao (2006) China	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of English learners	Monitoring children's learning routines supports autonomy development.
	Vanderfaeillie et al. (2020) Belgium	Mixed Methods	Surveys and Observations	Foster parents	Supervisory roles linked to fostering children's autonomy.
	Clark & Ladd (2000) USA	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents & children	Parental monitoring enhances children's self-regulation skills.

4. Communicator	Ho et al. (2023) Vietnam	Mixed Methods	Surveys Interviews	and Parents & students	Effective parent-teacher communication aligns home and school learning.
	Kalaycı & Öz (2018) Turkey	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of primary students	Communication strengthens parental involvement and learner autonomy.
	Distefano et al. (2021) USA	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of homeless families	Autonomy-supportive communication fosters learner self- direction.
5. Emotional Supporter	Bai & Gu (2022) China	Quantitative	Surveys	Parents & students	Emotional support from parents mediates learner self-efficacy and autonomy.
	Farida et al. (2024) Indonesia	Qualitative	Narrative Study	Parents of English learners	Emotional encouragement reduces language learning anxiety.
	Erickson & Wharton-McDonald (2018) USA	Qualitative	Interviews	Parents of early learners	Emotional scaffolding promotes independent learning behaviours.

Discussion

This review confirms that parental practices such as homework supervision, providing resources, encouragement and language exposure significantly support learner autonomy in primary school English learning. These findings align with previous research (Tao & Xu, 2022; Guay et al., 2016), emphasizing that structured parental involvement enhances children's self-regulation and independent learning skills. The findings of this systematic review also indicate that parental practices such as facilitating learning environments, encouraging independent language use, maintaining communication with teachers, and providing technological and material resources consistently support learner autonomy across various cultural contexts. These practices are in line with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which emphasizes autonomy-supportive environments as key to fostering intrinsic motivation. In Asian settings, such as China and Vietnam, parents often take a directive yet structured approach, guiding children's learning through routines, home tutoring, and expectations of excellence (Zhao et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2022). This contrasts with Western contexts like the US and UK, where learner independence is nurtured through dialogic engagement and parent-child negotiation in learning (Neubauer et al., 2021). The convergence of practices suggests a universal recognition of the need for home-based educational scaffolding, though its implementation varies due to sociocultural expectations and educational policy influences.

Additionally, parents play multiple roles such as motivators, co-learners, monitors, communicators and emotional supporters. This in collectively nurture students' confidence and engagement (Neubauer et al., 2021; Hurtado & Castañeda-Peña, 2016). These roles highlight the relational and emotional dimensions of fostering autonomy, reinforcing that learner autonomy is a shared responsibility between home and school. These results reaffirm Benson's (2011) perspective that autonomy development is a socially mediated process where it requires structured support from both educational institutions and family environments. Regarding the roles of parents, the analysis reveals that parents' function not just as helpers but as motivators, learning partners, monitors, and sometimes informal educators. The review found that across both high-context (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia) and low-context cultures (e.g., Australia, USA), parents play central roles in shaping learners' self-regulatory habits and motivation. However, the intensity and style of involvement differ in Malaysian and Indonesian parents, for example, tend to emphasize moral responsibility and respect for authority in learning (Ho et al., 2023), while Western parents more frequently prioritize open dialogue and learner-led decisions (Butler, 2015). These cross-cultural contrasts reinforce the need for culturally responsive parental engagement frameworks. The implication for educators and policy-makers is to recognize the nuanced roles parents play and to design school-family collaboration strategies that honor local values while encouraging learner independence.

Limitations and Recommendation of the Study

This review is limited to studies published in English from 2015 to 2025, which may exclude relevant research in other languages. The focus on primary school English learning narrows generalizability to other subjects or educational levels. Future research should explore cultural variations in parental support for learner autonomy, especially in multilingual and diverse socio-economic contexts. It is also recommended to conduct empirical studies in Malaysian primary schools to validate these findings locally.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that practices such as homework supervision, resource provision, encouragement, language exposure and parent-teacher communication are key strategies parents employ to nurture their children's autonomous learning. Second, parents assume vital roles as motivators, co-learners, monitors, communicators and emotional supporters, contributing to the development of learners' self-regulation and independence.

To put it in a nutshell, the review highlights the multifaceted nature of parental involvement in language learning, confirming that learner autonomy is not solely the domain of formal education but is significantly influenced by the home environment.

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to express his heartfelt gratitude to Dr Amelia Abdullah for her invaluable guidance, support and encouragement throughout this research. Her insightful feedback and dedication to excellence have been instrumental in shaping this study. The researcher would like to thank his family especially his wife and son for their constant support and understanding throughout this journey. Their encouragement has been a pillar of strength and motivation. Thank you all for your contributions to the completion of this research.

References

- Andreidakis, E., Joussemet, M., & Mageau, G. A. (2018). How to support toddlers' autonomy: Socialization practices reported by parents. *Early Education and Development*, 29(6), 745–761. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2018.1548811>
- Arraiza, J. M. (2015). *Making home rules for mother tongues: The legal implications of linguistic diversity in the design of autonomy regimes* (Doctoral dissertation, Åbo Akademi University). Åbo Akademi University Press. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2649400>
- Bai, X., & Gu, X. (2022). Effect of teacher autonomy support on the online self-regulated learning of students during COVID-19 in China: The chain mediating effect of parental autonomy support and students' self-efficacy. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 38(6), 1595–1610. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12676>
- Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. London: Longman.
- Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2021). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Butler, Y. G. (2015). Parental factors in children's motivation for learning English: A case in China. *Research Papers in Education*, 30(2), 164–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2014.891643>
- Ciriza, M. P. (2018). Bringing parents together: An innovative approach for parental involvement in an immersion school in the Basque Autonomous Community. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 39(10), 857–871. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2018.1467424>
- Clark, K. E., & Ladd, G. W. (2000). Connectedness and autonomy support in parent-child relationships: Links to children's socioemotional orientation and peer relationships. *Developmental Psychology*, 36(4), 485–498. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.36.4.485>

- Cleveland, E. S., & Morris, A. (2014). Autonomy support and structure enhance children's memory and motivation to reminisce: A parental training study. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 15(3), 414–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15248372.2012.742901>
- Costa, P., Lauria, A., & Chiesi, L. (2020). Promoting autonomy through home adaptations: Appropriation of domestic spaces in Italy. *Disability & Society*, 36(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1783205>
- Daniel, C. E., Halimi, F., & AlShammari, I. A. (2018). The impact of motivation and parental encouragement on English language learning: An Arab students' perspective. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 18(1), 176–187.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
- Distefano, R., Nelson, K. M., & Masten, A. S. (2021). A qualitative analysis of autonomy-supportive parenting in families experiencing homelessness. *Family Relations*, 70(5), 1452–1469. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12626>
- Erickson, J. D., & Wharton-McDonald, R. (2018). Fostering autonomous motivation and early literacy skills. *The Reading Teacher*, 72(2), 165–174. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1750>
- Farida, L., Mustofa, M., & Romadhon, M. G. E. (2024). Can I speak English in my home? The role of parents' support in students' English learning motivation: A narrative study. *Ethical Lingua*, 11(2), 467–473. <https://doi.org/10.30605/25409190.762>
- Feng, X., Xie, K., Gong, S., Gao, L., & Cao, Y. (2019). Effects of parental autonomy support and teacher support on middle school students' homework effort: Homework autonomous motivation as mediator. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 612. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00612>
- Gao, X. (2006). Strategies used by Chinese parents to support English language learning: Voices of 'elite' university students. *RELC Journal*, 37(3), 285–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688206071302>
- Gough, D., Oliver, S., & Thomas, J. (2017). *An introduction to systematic reviews* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Guay, F., Lessard, V., & Dubois, P. (2016). How can we create better learning contexts for children? Promoting students' autonomous motivation as a way to foster enhanced educational outcomes. In W. C. Liu, J. C. K. Wang, & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Building autonomous learners: Perspectives from research and practice using self-determination theory* (pp. 83–104). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-630-0_5
- Guay, F., Ratelle, C. F., & Chanal, J. (2016). Optimal learning in schools: The role of students' motivation and teachers' autonomy support. In Wentzel, K. R. & Ramani, G. B. (Eds.), *Handbook of social influences in school contexts: Social-emotional, motivation, and cognitive outcomes* (pp. 144–157). Routledge.
- Higgins, J. P. T., Thomas, J., Chandler, J., Cumpston, M., Li, T., Page, M. J., & Welch, V. A. (Eds.). (2024). *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* (Version 6.5). Cochrane. <https://training.cochrane.org/handbook/current>
- Ho, N. B., Dang, T. T., & Nguyen, C. T. (2023). Parents' contributions to Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language students' perceptions of learner autonomy. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 22(2), 54–75. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.2.4>
- Holec, H. (1981) *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon. First published 1979, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

- Hurtado Torres, S. A., & Castañeda-Peña, H. A. (2016). Exploring the roles of parents and students in EFL literacy learning: A Colombian case. *English Language Teaching*, 9(10), 156–167. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n10p156>
- Kalaycı, G., & Öz, H. (2018). Parental involvement in English language education: Understanding parents' perceptions. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 5(4), 832–847. <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/447>
- Laurin, J. C., & Joussemet, M. (2017). Parental autonomy-supportive practices and toddlers' rule internalization: A prospective observational study. *Motivation and Emotion*, 41(4), 497–511. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-017-9627-5>
- Lei, Q., & Mustapha, S. M. (2024). The mediating role of parent involvement in the relationships among learner autonomy, teacher support and academic performance of local Chinese primary school students. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 29(2, Series 10), 26–38. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2902102638>
- Li, X. (1999). How can language minority parents help their children become bilingual in familial context? A case study of a language minority mother and her daughter. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 23(2–3), 211–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1999.10668687>
- Li, Y. (2009). How can I help my students promote learner autonomy in English language learning? *Educational Journal of Living Theories*, 2(3), 365–398. <http://ejolts.net/node/163>
- Little, D. (1991). Developing learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: A social interactive view of learning and three.
- McCurdy, A. L., Williams, K. N., Lee, G. Y., Benito-Gomez, M., & Fletcher, A. C. (2020). Measurement of parental autonomy support: A review of theoretical concerns and developmental considerations. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 12(3), 382–397. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12389>
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2020). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 (Preschool to Post-Secondary Education)*. Ministry of Education Malaysia.
- Neubauer, A. B., Schmidt, A., Kramer, A. C., & Schmiedek, F. (2021). A little autonomy support goes a long way: Daily autonomy-supportive parenting, child well-being, parental need fulfillment, and change in child, family, and parent adjustment across the adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Child Development*, 92(5), 1679–1697. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13515>
- Newcombe, M. (2018). *Fostering the concept of autonomy in school-aged children* (Capstone Project, California State University, Monterey Bay). Digital Commons @ CSUMB. https://digitalcommons.csUMB.edu/caps_thes_all/265
- Nisskaya, A. K., & Tsyganova, E. M. (2024). Parental practices of controlling and supporting the autonomy of elementary school children and early adolescents in Russia: A qualitative study. *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art*, 17(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.11621/pir.2024.0201>
- Nguyen, T. T. M. (2022). Parents' contributions to Vietnamese English as a foreign language students' perceptions of learner autonomy. *Asian EFL Journal*, 24(5), 45–66. <https://www.elejournals.com/asian-efl-journal/>
- Özçelik, N. P. (2022). Parental involvement and learner autonomy in EFL context: A case study. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology*, 4(1), 56–65. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPSP.202213091>

- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., ... & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372, n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Papadakis, S. (2023). MOOCs 2012–2022: An overview. *Advances in Mobile Learning Educational Research*, 3(1), 682–693.
- Papadakis, S., Kiv, A. E., Kravtsov, H., Osadchyi, V. V., Marienko, M. V., Pinchuk, O. P., ... & Semerikov, S. O. (2023). Revolutionizing education: Using computer simulation and cloud-based smart technology to facilitate successful open learning. In *Joint Proceedings of the 10th Illia O. Teplytskyi Workshop on Computer Simulation in Education, and Workshop on Cloud-based Smart Technologies for Open Education (CoSinEi and CSTOE 2022) co-located with ACNS Conference on Cloud and Immersive Technologies* (No. 3358, pp. 1–18). CEUR Workshop Proceedings.
- Papadakis, S., Kiv, A. E., Kravtsov, H. M., Osadchyi, V. V., Marienko, M. V., Pinchuk, O. P., ... & Striuk, A. M. (2023). Unlocking the power of synergy: The joint force of cloud technologies and augmented reality in education. In *Joint Proceedings of the 10th Workshop on Cloud Technologies in Education (CTE 2021) and 5th International Workshop on Augmented Reality in Education (AREdu 2022)*, Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine, May 23, 2022.
- Purwanto, M. B., Agustin, A., & Despita, D. (2023). The role of parents in motivating students to learn English. *FLIP: Foreign Language Instruction Probe*, 2(1), 12–15. <https://jurnal.stit-buntetpesantren.ac.id/index.php/flip>
- Sigit, D. P. A., & Anam, S. (2024). Parental involvement effects in promoting students' self-efficacy and learner autonomy of the English language. *Jo-ELT (Journal of English Language Teaching)*, 11(2), 154–169. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jo-elt.v11i2.12468>
- Tao, J., & Xu, Y. (2022). Parental support for young learners' online learning of English in a Chinese primary school. *System*, 105, 102718. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102718>
- Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8(45). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45>
- Vaiopoulou, J., Papadakis, S., Sifaki, E., Stamovlasis, D., & Kalogiannakis, M. (2021). Parents' perceptions of educational apps use for kindergarten children: Development and validation of a new instrument (PEAU-p) and exploration of parents' profiles. *Behavioral Sciences*, 11(6), 82. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs11060082>
- Van Laar, E., Van Deursen, A. J., Van Dijk, J. A., & De Haan, J. (2017). The relation between 21st-century skills and digital skills: A systematic literature review. *Computers in human behavior*, 72, 577–588.
- Vanderfaellie, J., Van Den Abbeele, S., Fiorentino, G., Gypen, L., West, D., & Van Holen, F. (2020). The role of foster parents' basic psychological needs satisfaction and frustration as predictors of autonomy-supportive parenting and the functioning of foster children. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 116, 105229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105229>
- Zhang, H., & Whitebread, D. (2019). Identifying characteristics of parental autonomy support and control in parent–child interactions. *Early Child Development and Care*, 191(9), 1469–1481. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2019.1621303>
- Zhao, J., Liu, Y., & Zhang, H. (2019). Parental involvement and learner autonomy: Evidence from Chinese primary EFL learners. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 16(3), 1021–1036. <https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.3.5.1021>