

Access to english educational resources for children from low socio-economic backgrounds: a cultural value based on ethno-parenting

Aulia Dwi Amalina Wahab^{1*}, Ika Rachmayani², Hema Alini Manihuruk³, Niluh Putu Nina Sriwarthini⁴

¹ Universitas Mataram. Indonesia

² Universitas Mataram. Indonesia

³ Universitas Mataram. Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Mataram. Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze access to English language education resources for children from families with low socioeconomic backgrounds and the role of culturally based ethno-parenting in supporting their learning. Participants consisted of six parents and six elementary school-aged children in Mataram. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and questionnaires, and were then analyzed thematically with source triangulation to maintain validity. The results indicate that the primary obstacle faced by parents is economic constraints, which result in a lack of English learning facilities, including books, courses, and technological devices. Although almost all families own mobile phones, they are primarily used for entertainment rather than for educational purposes. From an ethno-parenting perspective, parents continue to instill local cultural values such as politeness, cooperation, and respect for elders. This, in some cases, supports motivation to learn English, but in other cases, it actually creates resistance because it is perceived as displacing the role of regional languages.

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Corresponding Author:

Name Author: Aulia Dwi Amalina Wahab

Affiliation, Country: Universitas Mataram, Indonesia

Email Author: auliawahab@unram.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, English proficiency is key to accessing better educational and employment opportunities. In Indonesia, English is taught in schools from elementary school to university. However, not all children have equal access to English learning, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Anwar, 2022). One of the factors that influences access to English language education is parenting by parents, or what is known as ethno-parenting.

This study highlights the importance of culturally based parenting in increasing access to English language education. The focus on parenting as a factor influencing educational access in impoverished communities offers novelty, particularly by identifying ways in which parents leverage their cultural values to support language learning in their families, despite resource constraints.

Ethno-parenting refers to a parenting approach influenced by the cultural values, norms, and practices of a particular ethnic group. These cultural values often shape parents' attitudes toward education, including foreign language education, such as English (Puspawati and Ulya, 2021). Children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds often have limited access to educational resources that support English learning, such as books, language courses, or necessary technological devices (Asifayanti, 2015). Parents from lower socioeconomic groups, particularly those from ethnic minorities, often struggle to provide adequate access to English language education resources. They are more focused on basic living needs and lack the knowledge or resources to support their children's English education (Nukman, Mariana and Subrata, 2024).

This research not only examines English language education from an academic perspective but also incorporates socio-cultural and economic perspectives. Thus, this approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of access to English language education among children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Combining financial and socio-cultural factors allows the research to produce more relevant and applicable recommendations, which can aid in designing more inclusive education policies. This research proposes to examine specific local contexts, focusing on how low socioeconomic conditions influence access to English language education in specific communities, and how culturally based parenting supports or limits this access. This novelty is significant because much similar research is more general in nature or focuses on specific populations without considering local cultural nuances.

In this regard, the reality on the ground indicates that the inculcation of cultural values, norms, and practices on Lombok Island, particularly among children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, has a significant impact on English language education. Children from poor families in Lombok often face barriers to accessing quality English language learning materials, which exacerbates the disparity in language education in the region. Parental parenting tends to be influenced by local cultural values, such as the use of the local language (*Sasak*) in everyday life. Many parents in Lombok, while aware of the importance of English, are limited in their ability to provide support due to economic constraints and a lack of resources for additional English language education, such as courses or internet access. Ethno-parenting in low socioeconomic communities on Lombok Island focuses more on teaching local cultural values and practical skills, while English is considered a somewhat marginalized need. Nevertheless, in some families that are more concerned with their children's education, despite limitations, there are efforts to integrate English into daily life, primarily through the media or formal education in schools (Herawan, 2025).

Given this phenomenon, it is important to understand how ethno-parenting influences parents' decisions about providing or accessing English language educational resources for their children. This study aims to delve deeper into the role of ethno-parenting in influencing children from low socioeconomic backgrounds' access to English language educational resources, as well as the obstacles they face.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach to deeply understand the role of ethno-parenting in influencing access to English language education for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The study involved six parents and six children from families living in urban and rural areas with low socioeconomic backgrounds. Participants were selected based on the criteria of being from low socioeconomic groups and having elementary school-aged children.

Data collection was conducted through interviews, observations, and questionnaires. In-depth interviews were conducted with parents to understand their views on English language education and the role of ethno-parenting in childcare. Meanwhile, observations of parent-child interactions at home were conducted to determine how parents supported (or did not support) their children's English learning. Finally, questionnaires were distributed to the children to determine the extent to which they felt supported by their parents in learning English and the resources they had available.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and questionnaires. By comparing the results obtained from these three methods, researchers were able to identify consistencies or differences between data collected from different sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The following is a table analyzing the results of research on Access to English Language Education Resources for Children from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds: A Parenting Perspective Based on Cultural Values (Ethno-parenting).

Table 1. Interview Analysis Results with Parents

Respondent	Access to Facilities	Economic Constraints	Cultural Values & Ethno-parenting	Attitudes towards English	Parents' Support
R1	"I often buy learning books that are purchased at school for English subjects. They also watch YouTube".	"For school fees, including tuition fees, we utilize assistance from the government."	"The cultural values that we instill in children are respecting elders, maintaining good manners in speaking and behaving, such as respecting elders by not using the word "you" but using the word "side"."	"English is very important because it can support children's education in the future."	"We pray for children's success, but we also need financial and school support".
R2	"We don't teach it very often, because children at school haven't learned	"We rely on government assistance and my husband's income from his work as a	"We maintain a culture of politeness, prioritizing regional languages".	"English education is important for children's future.	"Hope for a bright future for our children and also we hope to get better

	English yet, but there are posters that use English, such as number posters in English and Indonesian, and sometimes they look at YouTube.”	palm oil laborer.		However, because local communities prioritize the use of regional languages, English learning is less of a priority.”	facilities from the government.”
R3	“My husband and I often provide reading materials for our children whenever they need them, whether in the form of books or other English learning aids at home, sometimes using WiFi”.	“We have less money for extra lessons because sometimes we are looking for extra work”.	“Cultural values that we consider important to instill good manners, respect for elders, and cooperation.”	“In my opinion, English language education can help children adapt to the times without abandoning their cultural identity.”	“I hope that children can study/work abroad”.
R4	“I never provide English books.”	“Economic constraints are one of the reasons we struggle to support our children at school. Thankfully, our family sometimes receives government assistance, such as the Family Hope Program (PKH).”	“We maintain cultural values such as politeness.”	“We believe that English can provide wider opportunities in education and employment for our children in the future, although we often feel whether our children can or cannot keep up.”	“Hopefully, our son will have success.”

R5	“We have facilities in the form of cellphones, and if we need internet access, we will buy a package to support these needs.”	“Our economic limitations, especially in fulfilling or providing books and English learning aids at home, such as the Kartu Indonesia Pintar (KIP), to cover educational costs, and utilizing other available government assistance.”	“Yes, we apply cultural values as guidelines in shaping children's attitudes, behavior, and character. These values include being polite to elders, respecting each other, and maintaining good interpersonal relationships.”	“English is important because with this ability, children can have the opportunity to find work abroad.”	“We hope that our children can study abroad and become successful people, not like us, who are just ordinary laborers.”
R6	“Never provide English books, our handphones are only used for games.”	“We are constrained by tuition fees, therefore, we don't give our children additional lessons .”	“Cultural values are maintained at home, like politeness.”	“Our society places more emphasis on the use of their respective regional languages so that children are less accustomed to using English.”	“We hope the children grow up successful.”

Based on the findings, access to media and English learning facilities at home remains very limited. Some respondents, such as R1 and R3, make efforts to provide supplementary textbooks, while others rarely or never provide learning media at home. Nearly all families own mobile phones, but most are not connected to Wi-Fi, resulting in limited access to digital learning resources. This suggests that children's learning opportunities depend largely on parental initiative and the availability of rudimentary resources.

From a financial perspective, all respondents faced obstacles in providing optimal English language learning support. Financial constraints prevented parents from affording additional tutoring, and some even had to rely on government assistance or find additional work to make ends meet (Riski Anisa, 2023). This situation demonstrates that economic factors are a major obstacle to improving children's English skills.

In terms of cultural values and ethno-parenting, parents tended to emphasize the importance of preserving local cultural heritage, such as good manners, cooperation, and the use of regional languages. However, most respondents still supported mastering English as a future foundation, except for R2 and R6,

who prioritized regional languages and tended to show resistance to foreign languages. This phenomenon demonstrates the dynamic between the desire to maintain cultural identity and the need to adapt to global developments. Parents' attitudes toward English also varied. R1, R3, R4, and R5 considered English important for supporting their children's future, while R2 and R6 felt cultural barriers made them less supportive of English learning. These differences in attitudes demonstrate that foreign language acceptance is still influenced by perceptions of the family's cultural values (Fachmi et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, all respondents shared the same hope: to see their children succeed in the future. This support included financial assistance, adequate educational facilities, and an active role for schools in supporting learning. Some respondents even had ambitious aspirations, such as R3, who hoped her child would continue their education or work abroad. This confirms that despite limited financial resources and facilities, parents still have high aspirations for their children's education, hoping for a collaborative role between families, schools, and the government in supporting the English language learning process.

Table 2. Analysis of Interview Results with Children

Respondents	English Learning in Schools	English Learning Books/Resources at Home	English Applications
A1	"Yes, there is an English subject at school."	"I only have English learning books from school."	"I usually watch YouTube and educational Games."
A2	"Yes, there is."	"I have posters of English animals and vegetables at home."	"I watch YouTube."
A3	"Yes, I learn English at school."	"I have an English textbook from my English teacher."	"Yaaa, just games. The sounds use English."
A4	"No, I don't learn English at school."	"I don't have any because I never learn English. I watch YouTube but only with Indonesian Subtitles."	"I watch YouTube with Indonesian subtitles; sometimes there will be English subtitles."
A5	"Yes, I learn English."	"I have school books."	"No, only once."
A6	"No, I don't because I don't learn at school."	"So I don't have any English books or English posters."	"Yes, I watch YouTube sometimes."

From the data obtained, it can be seen that most children (A1, A2, A3, A5) have received English learning at school, although the form is still limited to basic vocabulary. However, there are two children (A4 and A6) who have not received any English learning at school, so their initial access to this foreign language is relatively limited. In terms of the availability of learning resources at home, only four children (A1, A2, A3, A5) have supporting materials in the form of school books or simple posters, while the other two children (A4 and A6) do not have any English learning materials at home due to economic limitations

Discussion

In general, research results show that the parenting styles of parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds significantly influence their perspectives on their children's English education. These parenting styles are influenced by economic constraints, cultural values, and access to media and learning facilities. Differences in access to learning resources at home are clearly visible between families. R1 and R3 more frequently provide supplementary books for their children, so their children (A1 and A3) have learning resources other than those found in school. This has a positive impact because children can still access materials through books and gadgets (e.g., YouTube or educational games). In contrast, R4 and R6 never provide books at home, so their children (A4 and A6) also lack formal learning resources at home. This situation demonstrates how parenting patterns are influenced by parents' ability to provide learning resources, even though economic constraints are a major factor. From a psychological perspective, families with low socioeconomic status can result in limited access to media and learning resources, which impacts children's language skills (Erna *et al.*, 2021). Children with adequate access to resources will experience faster language development than children with limited resources. Adequate stimulation in the form of books, learning media, or opportunities to interact using English will trigger optimal language development. This is in line with (Schmidt *et al.*, 2009), which states that adequate facilities and the use of technology have a significant influence on English language learning.

Furthermore, in the context of cultural values and ethno-parenting, all respondents emphasized the importance of good manners, respect for parents, and cooperation in educating children (Linse, Caroline., 2014). This reflects the continued strong role of local culture in the educational process at the family level. However, there are differing views regarding the relationship between cultural values and English language learning. Some parents believe English aligns with local cultural values because it can open up global opportunities and strengthen children's prospects. Others believe that mastering English has the potential to conflict with cultural values because it could displace the dominance of regional languages. This finding is in line with the opinion (Hariani *et al.*, 2024), which emphasizes that linguistic globalization has the potential to weaken the existence of mother tongues. Therefore, a balanced bilingual education strategy is needed so that children can master global languages like English without losing their local cultural identity (Shim, 2018). An ethno-parenting approach can be a solution, namely a parenting pattern that integrates local cultural values into children's education (Oktaria and Putra, 2020) In this way, English can be learned without having to sacrifice existing cultural values.

Regarding attitudes toward English, the majority of respondents stated that English is important for their children's future, both for continuing their education and obtaining employment. This awareness reflects a recognition of English's role as a global language that opens access to social and economic mobility. However, cultural resistance remains, particularly from families who emphasize the use of regional languages. This view aligns with the findings (Phillips and Stern, 1986), which states that although English has become a global lingua franca, local acceptance of it is heavily influenced by cultural factors and linguistic identity. In other words, acceptance of English in a simple family context is determined not only by awareness of its benefits, but also by how the family balances it with the local language. This finding underscores the need for an educational approach that focuses not only on academic aspects but also on cultural aspects to achieve more positive acceptance.

Finally, the theme of hopes and expected support shows that all parents have high expectations for English language learning. They hope their children will achieve a bright, successful future, even leading to employment or further education abroad. This hope demonstrates that parents recognize the importance of mastering English as a preparation for facing global challenges (Deswalantri *et al.*, 2024). However, they also emphasize the importance of external support, particularly from schools and the government. This support is expected to include financial assistance, the provision of educational facilities, and a more active role for

schools in teaching English. This expectation aligns with the mandate of the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education, which emphasizes the importance of equal access to education and special support for children from families with economic limitations. Therefore, collaboration between families, schools, and the government is key to ensuring that children from low-income families continue to have equal opportunities to master English.

Overall, the results of this study underscore that limited learning facilities and economic constraints are indeed significant obstacles for low-income families. However, maintaining local cultural values and positive attitudes toward English demonstrates the existence of strong social capital to support children's education. If this social capital is strengthened with appropriate policy support, children from low-income families still have the opportunity to master English and compete in the global era. In other words, English education among low-income families is not only an economic issue, but also a cultural issue, a family strategy, and the active role of the government and schools.

CONCLUSION

The obstacles faced by parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds primarily lie in economic limitations, making it difficult to provide English learning resources such as books, courses, and technological devices. Cultural values in ethno-parenting play a significant role in influencing parental decisions. The majority of parents continue to instill the values of politeness, respect, and cooperation in parenting. Some parents view English as aligned with cultural values as a foundation for their children's future. Parents overcome limitations in providing English language education through various adaptive strategies. Parents are trying to take advantage of government assistance, find additional income, and even provide independent tutoring at home.

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